

# Interregnum: Queen Regency in the Seleucid Empire

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## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## **Abstract**

An examination of the ancient sources indicates that there were possibly seven Queens Regent throughout the course of the Seleucid Dynasty: Apama, Laodice I, Berenice Syra, Laodice III, Laodice IV, Cleopatra I Thea, and Cleopatra II Selene. This thesis examines the institution of Queen Regency in the Seleucid Dynasty, the power and duties held by the Queen Regent, and the relationship between the Queen and her son—the royal heir. This thesis concludes that Queen Regency was not a set office and that there were multiple reasons and functions that could define a queen as a regent.

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## Glossary

**Anadeixis:** The investiture ceremony including a public showing of the new king.

**Auto-ekdosis:** Handing oneself over in marriage.

**Co-regency:** A system of rulership consisting of two joint monarchs, also known as a diarchy or a co-rulership.

**Dowager Queen:** A widowed queen.

**Incessant Co-regent/Regent:** A co-regent or regent who is unwilling to relinquish power once the heir reaches the age of majority or is capable of ruling the empire on his own.

**Interim Regent:** One who acts as a regent for a minor child while the king is still alive but is unavailable to fulfill his roles as monarch.

**Interregnum:** The period or gap between the rule of one accepted monarch and his successor.

**Levirate marriage:** To gain legitimacy through marriage by marrying the widow of the former king.

**Primogeniture:** The right of succession belonging to the first-born child, usually the son.

**Queen Consort:** A queen who is married to (or who is the primary wife of) a living king.

**Queen Mother:** A queen who is the mother of the reigning king.

**Queen Regent:** A queen who, upon the death of the king, her husband, rules the kingdom through her son and grooms him to become king while he is a minor.

**Queen Regnant:** A queen who is sole monarch either due to a lack of male heirs or through her own legitimate claim to rule.

**Regent:** One who assumes the powers of the monarchy in the name of an underage, absent, or incapacitated heir until he is able to rule.

**Repeat Regent:** One who is regent multiple times, usually for different heirs.

**Successful Regency:** Regency that is concluded with the royal heir succeeding to the throne as sole monarch upon reaching the age of majority.

**Unsuccessful Regency:** Regency that is not concluded with the royal heir succeeding to the throne, usually due to the heir's death during childhood.

## Introduction

An Interregnum period is, by definition, a gap between periods of rule. If the king was to die before his heir was at an appropriate age to become king, this would result in an Interregnum. In the Hellenistic Era, it was highly unusual and unacceptable for a queen to be the sole monarch of an empire, except in the case of regency. Regency was necessary to provide governance to the empire, protection for the royal heir, and the continuation of the dynasty. A regent was simply someone who took on the responsibilities of the kingdom in the name of the heir, but was not necessarily the queen. There were male regents in the Hellenistic Era, often advisors or brothers of the former king, who might seize the office as a means of usurping the throne for themselves. This often led to the eventual murder of the heir when the regent felt secure as king in his own right. One such male regent will be discussed later in this thesis.<sup>1</sup> However, this study seeks to develop an understanding of the intricacies of the Queens Regent in the Seleucid Dynasty—their duties, politics, and relationships.

Regency in the Hellenistic era was not a set institution or office with clear roles and functions.<sup>2</sup> The Queens Regent were never defined as such in the ancient sources, thus regency itself can be better understood as a set of behaviours or responses to events and circumstances that shaped the Queen Regent's career. Just as the role of *basilissa* is unclear and ill-defined, so too is the role of Queen Regent, thus the reader must employ caution against envisioning Queen Regency as an official and legal office with set roles and functions.

The goal of this thesis is not to determine whether a Seleucid queen was a regent, whether she was recognized as anything that could be similarly defined as a regent by her

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<sup>1</sup> See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24-25 concerning Antiochus IV.

<sup>2</sup> The role of Perdiccas as protector or chiliarch over Alexander's brother Arrhidaeus and his son Alexander IV has been called regency by many scholars and suggests that there was the existence of some sort of office like regency (Grainger 1990a, 16 & 18-19; Will 1982, 21).

contemporaries, or whether she can be forced to fit into a modern definition of the term. The goal is to explore the many functions and behaviours of the queens under certain conditions which, for convenience, are here grouped under the loose term “regency”.

The Queens Regent started their lives as royal or noble daughters; they were later queens and mothers. By the time they entered the office of regency, they were already highly invested in the perpetuation of the dynasty and, ideally also, the well-being of the empire. The heirs were their offspring who depended on them for their survival and for their safe succession to the throne. The queens were dependent on the survival of their sons in order to maintain their own position of power, and also for their own safety. As already stated, it was unacceptable for the Seleucid queen to rule on her own unless she had a son who was the figurehead of the empire. The office of regency offered queens the opportunity and power to rule the empire as female kings. During their careers, Queens Regent showed themselves to be great king-makers or power-hungry despots who were unwilling to relinquish their power—sometimes both.

In our sources, the Queens Regent discussed in this study showed themselves to be mostly ‘successful’ in promoting their sons to the throne, though some died trying. Once the heir inherited the throne, the queens were expected to step down from their position as ruler, but some seem to have been unwilling to give up their positions of power, either attempting to rule through him or by attempting to replace him on the throne with a younger and more acquiescent son. For their unwillingness to give up their position of power, these regents are categorized in this study as *Incessant Regents*. An additional exception to the general definition of regency can be seen in two cases when the role of Seleucid Queen Regent was possibly occupied without the prior death of the king for which these queens will be referred to as *Interim Regents*.



The queens who will be discussed in this thesis are included on the basis that there is some evidence of their association as regents for their sons. For some of them, the fact that they were regents at all is highly debatable; yet in order to learn anything about regency in the Seleucid dynasty, one must consider all the evidence available. The different primary sources that were consulted for this study are historical literary accounts, Babylonian astronomical records, epigraphic documents, Egyptian papyri, and coinage. The written accounts were mostly written in Greek and Latin which were consulted in the original language and in translation; Babylonian texts were read in translation.

The queens who will be featured in this thesis are: Apama, Berenice Syra, Laodice I, Laodice III, Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene. Many of the queens who will be discussed have the same given name. For the sake of simplicity, the Cleopatras and Laodices are numbered. Many of these women have epithets and will at times be referred to by these, thus Cleopatra I Thea Eueteria may be referred to as Cleopatra Thea, or only as Thea, etc. For the sake of avoiding confusion, the widely-used Latin forms of Greek names will be used. All dates are B.C.

## **CHAPTER 1: Nature of the Sources**

Our chief sources of evidence for the study of royal Seleucid women are the literary accounts of the ancient historians. Greek and Latin authors such as Appian, Arrian, Athenaeus, Diodorus, Poseidonius, Polyaeus, Polybius, Porphyry, and Justin (Pompeius Trogus), Jewish historians such as Josephus and the author of 1 Maccabees. Other Near Eastern sources that are important sources of evidence are the Babylonian and Sumerian king lists, the astronomical diaries, and Egyptian papyri (predominantly of political propaganda). All these sources prove invaluable to the development of an understanding of the royal women's place in history. Material evidence includes numerous inscriptions and coins. These various sources provide different pieces to the puzzle concerning the careers of the Seleucid queens, but each is not without its own pitfalls. An understanding of the complexities and methodologies of each is necessary to the development of a critical outlook based on the material.

### **1.1 Literary Sources**

Many challenges are encountered when working with historical accounts. The ancient historical narratives were often written generations after the events occurred. Some ancient historians were tourists, writing histories based on local accounts, some borrowed or composited other works together, and very few of them wrote about events which they actually experienced or learned about from first-hand accounts. Many ancient historical literary sources have not survived to the present day in their entirety. Fragments of many lost volumes have been preserved by later writers who quoted or attributed their anecdotes to them. The fragments could possibly be composed of misunderstood or misquoted information as they were often written

from memory.<sup>3</sup> Unless these fragments were cited by multiple sources (which some are) allowing for comparative study, it is difficult to trust their validity in many cases.

The ancient historians were rarely impartial narrators; their works are often wrought with prejudices, embellishments, lies, and inaccuracies. At times, the accounts of the ancient historians also include scandalous tales, hearsay, propaganda, reproaches, egotism, androcentrism, and xenophobia. Accounts of historical individuals were often embellished and salacious in order to be entertaining.<sup>4</sup> The Greek historians emphasized and exaggerated the “strangeness” of monarchies (i.e. how unlike the Greeks these families were). Many of the ancient literary accounts of royal behaviour are tainted by prejudicial beliefs of some historians concerning the despotic nature of monarchy.<sup>5</sup> Their depictions of influential Hellenistic queens are often harsh and negative and would have been understood by the readers as especially outrageous in contrast to Greeks.<sup>6</sup>

Roman historians also tended to cast Eastern peoples and monarchs in a dark light. The Romans saw people from Egypt, Syria, and the Middle-East as gluttons of wealth, power, and luxury, and characterized their men as effeminate and mentally weak.<sup>7</sup> The power and influence that were attributed to the queens by the Greek and Latin historians amplified the weakness and ineptitude of the kings.<sup>8</sup> The queens, seemingly driven by their desire for power, are often depicted as wicked, conniving, and self-interested despots who viewed all players in their lives as dispensable—even their own children.<sup>9</sup> The historians often comment on the ruthlessness of queenly actions, even though they are no more heinous than the actions committed by kings.

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<sup>3</sup> Marincola 2011, 2

<sup>4</sup> Marincola 2011, 3 & 8

<sup>5</sup> Brosius 1996, 105, 112; Carney 1993, 320-22

<sup>6</sup> Brosius 1996, 112 & 122

<sup>7</sup> Jones 2012, 173

<sup>8</sup> Brosius 1996, 105

<sup>9</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 36-37; Brosius 1996, 105 makes these same points regarding the treatment of Persian royal women by Greek historians.

Many of their allegedly atrocious acts could not have even been committed without the consent of their husbands or sons, so it is likely that the queens were sometimes used as scapegoats for narrative or propagandistic reasons.<sup>10</sup> Thus in the words of Savalli-Lestrade, “it is always necessary to distinguish between realities and representations.”<sup>11</sup>

Pertinent historical narratives, as well as non-literary official documentation relating to the Seleucid queens, are also found in Egyptian papyri, mainly documents of political propaganda such as the Gourob Papyrus.<sup>12</sup> The constraints associated with such documents are similar to that of the ancient historians: they are often biased, they embellish or even lie about their facts to suit the goal of their propaganda. Further complications arise from the fact that papyrus is a natural material and is prone to degradation. Climate or environmental conditions, fungi, algae, and even the use of corrosive pigments can be responsible for the decay or breakage of papyri. The dry arid desert can slow the process of decay of natural materials, so papyri found in dry conditions are more likely to survive, but this does not necessarily mean that they survive in their entirety.<sup>13</sup> Scholars and papyrologists have worked to restore many damaged pieces of papyri, but even the best and most educated restorations can contain mistakes or leave room for interpretation.

## 1.2 Inscriptions

Inscriptions, mainly decrees and letters, provide information on the responsibilities of the queens, honours that were paid to them, and who supported them. One of the major challenges of epigraphic remains is that they often survive only in fragments. Scholars have worked to restore missing portions of many remains through letter analysis, a thorough knowledge of the language

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<sup>10</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 36-37; Savalli-Lestrade, 2003b, 18

<sup>11</sup> Savalli-Lestrade, 2003b, 18

<sup>12</sup> Three out of the six Seleucid Queens Regent that will be discussed are of Ptolemaic descent: Berenice Syra, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene.

<sup>13</sup> For further information on the nature of papyri, see Grasselli 1983.

and dialect used, and through an understanding of the conventions used in other documents of the same genre. But if the genre of the document is not clearly distinguishable, reconstructions can be arduous, misleading, and/or erroneous. Another challenge with the material evidence is that artifacts are often found dissociated from their contexts. Inscribed statue bases of Seleucid kings and queens are often found without their statues. Statues of Seleucid kings that are still in existence are no longer associated with their bases and cannot be attributed with absolute certainty. No statues of the queens have been found, or at least none can be attributed to them with certainty.<sup>14</sup> Stone artifacts were also commonly reused for other purposes than they were initially intended, such as for new building projects.

Documentary cuneiform inscriptions such as the Babylonian astronomical diaries and the Sumerian and Babylonian king lists help to place the queens within the context of events occurring in the empire during their careers.<sup>15</sup> The astronomical diaries were mainly recordings of the seasons, movement of the stars, and other natural phenomena, but they also listed the reigns of the Seleucid kings, and their appearance or involvement in cult activities which at times included the queens. The king lists recorded the regnant years of the kings in succession. The queens are not named in these lists; however, these lists are essential for revealing whether their offspring successfully inherited the throne. The Uruk king list (King List 5=IM 65066) covers the rules of Kandanelanu (647-627) to Seleucus II (246-226/5). The Babylonian king list covers the rules of Philip Arrhidaeus (323) to Antiochus IV (175-164).<sup>16</sup> This list was composed of compiled information from other historical sources such as the astronomical diaries that were available in Babylon.<sup>17</sup> The chronology and dates correspond accurately to the dates of other official texts. One of the main challenges with the king list is that the compilers only sometimes

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<sup>14</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 130

<sup>15</sup> The astronomical diaries are published and translated in three volumes by Sachs & Hunger 1988.

<sup>16</sup> Sachs & Wiseman 1954, 202

<sup>17</sup> Sachs & Wiseman 1954, 210

included information on co-rulership and it is not evident why some would have been included, but not others.<sup>18</sup> Like other inscriptions, some of these cuneiform tablets are damaged and present the same challenges for restoring missing information.

### 1.3 Coinage and Seal Impressions

Coins are mostly composed of metals (bronze, silver, gold) that are quite durable and often survive in excellent condition, unless they are in an environment that is conducive to rust. Coins were mass-produced and sometimes hoarded; it is therefore likely that many different issues survive from antiquity to the present day. Coins were not only used for currency, they were also moveable pieces of political marketing and mementos of the rulers.<sup>19</sup> Coin portraits were sometimes the only glimpse that citizens had of their rulers; this was a medium which had the farthest reach in the empire so these were infused with symbolism that was recognizable to their intended audiences.<sup>20</sup> Seleucid coins were typically in the Attic standard for Greek users as the coins of Alexander the Great had been. Ptolemaic coins were typically in the Phoenician standard which was the accepted Egyptian currency.<sup>21</sup> Depending on the intended users of the coins, places that would typically mint their coins in one standard could opt to mint new issues in another.

The Hellenistic kings relied heavily on symbolism, much of which they adopted from Alexander the Great. The *diadochoi* were not legitimate rulers of their territories by means of descent, so they assimilated themselves to Alexander (the alleged son of a god and the greatest conqueror the world had ever seen) in order to claim legitimacy through him.<sup>22</sup> Beginning with

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<sup>18</sup> Sachs & Wiseman 1954, 211

<sup>19</sup> Gariboldi 2004, 366

<sup>20</sup> Smith 1988, 12

<sup>21</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 63; Meadows 2001, 56-57

<sup>22</sup> Mørkholm 1991, 27

Ptolemy I, sometime prior to 318, the Hellenistic rulers issued posthumous coins with a deified bust of Alexander.<sup>23</sup> Seleucus I also later issued coins of a 'divine' Alexander. The Alexander coins displayed Alexander with a diadem over his hallmark wavy hair. He was also often depicted with the horns of Zeus Ammon, the god who he claimed was his true father as told to him by the oracle at Siwa.<sup>24</sup>

The issuance of coins with the Hellenistic king's own portrait also began with Ptolemy I after 306/5.<sup>25</sup> His portraits depicted him with the royal diadem and wavy hair of Alexander; he was soon followed in this method by Demetrius I Poliorcetes.<sup>26</sup> Seleucus' portrait was featured on coins as the founder of the dynasty under his son and successor, Antiochus I.<sup>27</sup> Antiochus I also issued coins with his own portrait and each new Seleucid king in succession minted new coins bearing their own portraits.<sup>28</sup> Smith asserts that this is indicative of the lack of dynastic stability which led to the desire of portraying the appearance of a functioning government under the king's authority.<sup>29</sup>

The first clear representation of a queen on coinage is Ptolemaic. These coins were issued by Ptolemy II which bore the portrait of his wife, Arsinoë II.<sup>30</sup> The coins depicted her bust in profile, veiled with a melon/bun coiffure and *stephane* (tiara). The reverse of the coins displayed a double cornucopia. There are also jugate coins of Arsinoë and Ptolemy II, on which Arsinoë

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<sup>23</sup> Smith 1988, pl. 74.1-7

<sup>24</sup> SC I: pl. 1-17; For the tale of Alexander and the oracle at Siwa see Strabo 17.43. For more on the coin portraits of Alexander, see Politt 1986, 26-31.

<sup>25</sup> Smith 1988, pl. 75.1-2; Mørkholm 1991, 27. For examples of coinage displaying Alexander with the horns of ammon, see Stewart 1993, fig. 8b, 117-19.

<sup>26</sup> Demetrius: Smith 1988, pl. 74.8; Seleucus: Smith 1988, pl. 76.1-2

<sup>27</sup> See SC I: pl. 17.309.1

<sup>28</sup> See SC I: pl. 17-22

<sup>29</sup> Smith 1988, 13

<sup>30</sup> Newell 1937, 101 fig. 1-2 & 106 fig. 11; Amastris, daughter of Oxathres (brother of Darius III), was the first Hellenistic queen to have her own name appear on coinage (Mørkholm 1991, 96, fig. 276, 279; Brosius 1996, 18.). She is also, at times, credited as the first queen to have her image minted on coins which bear the inscription, 'Queen Amastris' (Amastris Basilissis); however, the portraits cannot be identified with certainty. For example, SNGvA 152 is identified as the portrait of Amastris by Von Aulock and Burcu Erciyas (2005, 32) but is identified as the portrait of Mithras by Mørkholm (1991, 96 and fig.280).

wears a diadem instead of a *stephane*.<sup>31</sup> The imagery on the multiple minting of this series of coins depicted Arsinoë as a bride, a priestess, and divine ruler. The imagery assimilated her to the goddess Agathe Tyche or Isis-Demeter as a symbol of agricultural fertility, expressing that the empire would be bountiful with her on the throne.<sup>32</sup> The prevalence of the goddess Tyche in the Hellenistic era was indicative of this turbulent time of wars and the rise and fall of kingdoms, leading many to pay particular attention to the randomness of their own lives and fortune.<sup>33</sup> By worshipping Tyche, or the personal *tyche* (fortune) of a ruler, citizens were essentially trying to ensure good fortune for themselves.<sup>34</sup>

The coinage of Arsinoë II must have been considered successful tools of advertisement as they were henceforth emulated by the other Hellenistic kingdoms in the depictions of their queens. The Seleucids also added some elements to emphasize their Syrian or Egyptian ties, depending on the queen. Combined with epigraphic evidence, the coinage demonstrates that Seleucid queens were to be seen as benefactresses of grain and protectors of families, predominantly wives, mothers, maidens, and children.<sup>35</sup> Further information on the numismatic evidence regarding Seleucid Queen Regency will be provided in the discussion of the queens below.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Mørkholm 1991, 104-05 and pl. 297; The diadem is a symbol of rule and divinity. The first Hellenistic queen to appear wearing the diadem is Arsinoë II after the establishment of the cult of the *theoi adelphoi* (Pomeroy 1990, 29). The Seleucid Queens Regent who appear on coins all have coin issues that display them wearing a diadem. Of these, only the later coins of Cleopatra Thea (c. 125/6 and later) depict the queen wearing a *stephane* instead of the diadem (unless the diadem is hidden under the stephane or veil). For these coins, see SC II: 465-7 & 469-81 nos. 2258-77.

<sup>32</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 69; Smith 1994, 92 & 98; For the assimilation of Tyche with other divine figures, see LIMC VIII: 123. For Agathe Tyche, see LIMC VIII: 124. For the Syncretism of Isis and Demeter, see Pakkanen 1996, 92 & 94-100.

<sup>33</sup> For examples of the randomness attributed to *tyche*, see Polyb. 29.21.1-7 and 29.22.2, Walbank 2011, 349-355, and Mikalson 2006, 213. For a discussion of fortune and the goddess Tyche, see Politt, 1986, 1-4 and LIMC VIII: 115-17.

<sup>34</sup> Mikalson 2006, 212-13; Politt 1986, 2

<sup>35</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 72

<sup>36</sup> See 2.4 Laodice IV, 23-24, 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 28-29, and 2.6 Cleopatra Selene, 31-33.



Coins can be the most clear visual indicators of regency and co-rule through the display of two portrait busts. Double busts can be displayed vis-à-vis, occupying opposite sides of a single coin, or jugate (overlapping portraits). Jugate was the preferred form of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. In this arrangement, it seems that the individual displayed in the foreground is the dominant one. Jugate coins typically displayed the portrait of the king and queen in commemoration of marriage or joint rule, or the queen and the future king to represent regency.<sup>37</sup> Jugate coins which were minted during regency may have been struck in commemoration of the *anadeixis* (investiture ceremony) and were sometimes struck on gold—a rare commemorative standard. Three Seleucid queens appeared on coins in jugate fashion with their sons: Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene.

Royal clay seals displayed portrait impressions with royal insignia that is very similar to royal coinage. At times they are so close that it is possible that die engravers may have used the same official portrait models for seals and coinage to ensure a consistent official image of the ruler; although the seal dies were often less refined than the latter.<sup>38</sup> Clay seals were for personal use and would be used for sealing and storing official documents or containers, and/or sending out royal correspondence on papyrus or vellum. Seal impressions are very useful in discerning the figure of diplomatic and administrative authority. If the document to which the seal was attached also survived, the document can provide invaluable information concerning the roles, duties, and power of the sender, as well as the name and occupation of the intended recipient. Collections of Seleucid *bullae* have survived from Uruk and Seleucia on the Tigris which include

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<sup>37</sup> Jugate coins of Seleucid brothers/co-regents exist for Antiochus XI and Philip I (SC II: 2435-39). The jugate coins of the Seleucid queens are: Laodice IV with Antiochus IV (SC II: 35-8 and no. 1368 mislabelled as 1638b and no. 1441, 186 no. 1691), Laodice V with Demetrius I (SC II: 183-86 and nos. 1683-89 & 1691), Cleopatra Thea with Alexander Balas (SC II: 243-45 and nos. 1841, 1843-46, 249-50 and nos. 1860-61), and Cleopatra Thea with Antiochus VIII Grypus (SC II: 469-80, nos. 2259-62, 2265, 2267-73 and 2276-77) and Cleopatra Selene with Antiochus XIII Asiaticus (SC II: nos. 2484-86).

<sup>38</sup> Smith 1988, 14

some royal portraits among those of non-royal but probably high-ranking individuals.<sup>39</sup> Two jugate clay seals of a young boy in the foreground and a queen in the background have survived from the Seleucid era.<sup>40</sup> Because portrait busts on seals are very similar to those used for coins, these have been attributed with a fair amount of certainty to Antiochus the Younger and Laodice III, and the other to Antiochus the Younger and his sister-wife Laodice IV.<sup>41</sup>

As can be seen, research about the Seleucid queens requires an examination of a variety of different sources, each with its own benefits and drawbacks, thus all sources must be considered with caution. It is therefore not possible to ascertain the functions of the Seleucid Queens Regent with absolute certainty. However, by considering the wealth of sources available, patterns begin to emerge that are useful in developing a generalization of what their careers may have entailed. An understanding of the office of Queen Regency is not only important for an understanding of the roles of powerful women in antiquity, but also as a contribution to future studies of the evolution or devolution of the roles and freedoms of women through time.

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<sup>39</sup> Smith 1988, 14

<sup>40</sup> Iossif and Lorber 2007, 65-67; See 2.3 Laodice III, no. 82

<sup>41</sup> Antiochus the Younger or “the younger Antiochus (Plb. 16.18)” is the eldest son of Antiochus III and Laodice III. He is also referred to as Antiochus ‘the son’ (Livy 35.15.2).

## CHAPTER 2: Overview of the Seleucid Queens Regent

A brief overview of the lives and careers of the Seleucid queens for whom there is evidence of possible regency will be covered in this chapter in order to establish an understanding of who they are, how they became regents, and what their roles were as such. These queens are Apama, Laodice I, Berenice Syra, Laodice III, Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene. They will each be discussed in chronological order of rule. A deeper examination of the roles of a Seleucid Queen Regent will be provided in Chapter 4.

Many modern scholars disagree on the numbering of the queens—especially the Laodices. This report follows Ogden's sequence of the queens where there are five accepted Laodices: Laodice I, wife of Antiochus II; Laodice II, wife of Seleucus II; Laodice III, married to Antiochus III; Laodice IV, daughter of Antiochus III and Laodice III and married to as many as three of her brothers; and Laodice V, married to Demetrius I.<sup>42</sup> Variation in the numbering of the Laodices is often due to the inclusion of the wives of Achaeus the Elder and Achaeus the Younger, and due to the hypothesis that Laodice IV was actually multiple women. It will be assumed in this report that Laodice IV is one person, as will be explained in detail below.<sup>43</sup>

### 2.1 Apama

(Active c.324-280)

Apama was the daughter of the Bactrian noble, Spitamenes, and she was the first queen of the Seleucid dynasty.<sup>44</sup> She was married to Seleucus I Nicator in the mass wedding at Susa in 324 that was orchestrated by Alexander the Great between his generals and Persian noble

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<sup>42</sup> See Appendix I for a list of the Queens Regent, their husbands, and children.

<sup>43</sup> See 2.4 Laodice IV, 22-25.

<sup>44</sup> Strab. 7.8.15 states incorrectly that Apama was the daughter of Artabazus.

women.<sup>45</sup> According to Appian, Seleucus I Nicator founded three settlements called Apameia including Apameia on the Axios founded c.301-299 which was one of Seleucus' four most important settlements.<sup>46</sup> Apama bore Seleucus I's royal heir: Antiochus I Soter.<sup>47</sup> Antiochus I Soter also named a Phrygian city Apameia in honour of his mother.<sup>48</sup> Apama's career was unremarkable in the sense that ancient historians did not find any entertaining elements in her queenship which would warrant writing about her at any length.

Apama was not Seleucus' only wife; he also married Stratonice, the daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes (c. 299). A dedicatory inscription on a base that once held a bronze statue, commissioned in the same year that Seleucus married Stratonice, reveals that Apama was still called "Queen Apama, wife of King Seleucus" indicating that she was not divorced, repudiated, or disgraced.<sup>49</sup> In 293, Seleucus gave his wife Stratonice to his son Antiochus I as a bride. He may have been married to Apama all the while since there is no evidence that implies the contrary.<sup>50</sup>

While Seleucus I was on campaign in Bactria-Sogdiana (c.307-305), Apama may have been an Interim Regent for her son, Antiochus I Soter, who was about sixteen or seventeen years old at the time of his father's absence. While her husband was away, Apama held some authority over the royal treasury. Her fiscal and administrative authority is evident from an honorary inscription (c. 299) that was set up in honour of Apama for sanctioning the building of a temple

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<sup>45</sup> Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.4-6; Livy 38.13 says that Apama was Seleucus I's sister, but this was probably due to the dynastic practice of calling the king's wife his sister (See Grainger 1997, 38).

<sup>46</sup> Seleucus Nicator's most powerful cities were Antioch near Daphne, Seleukeia in Pieria, Apameia on the Axios, and Laodiceia (Cohen 2006, 95); Apamaeia on the Axios was a military city where most of the army was stationed and battle animals such as horses and elephants were kept (Cohen 2006, 95). For more on cities called Apameia see App. *Syr.* 57 and Strabo. 16.2.4.

<sup>47</sup> Por. *FGrH* 32

<sup>48</sup> Strabo 7.8.15; This settlement is known as Apameia Kelainai.

<sup>49</sup> OGIS 745=IDidyma 113= PHI Didyma 182; Brosius 18 & 78 no.72; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26.

<sup>50</sup> App. *Syr.* 59-61; Some scholars speculate that Seleucus may have also married the daughter of the Hindu king Sandrocottus to seal a peace treaty; however, Appian and Strabo merely state that they entered into a marriage alliance, not specifying who married whom from either side (App. *Syr.* 55; Strabo 15.724; Ogden 1999, 120). Further information on Seleucus I's dealings with Sandrocottus can be found at Justin 15.4.

in Didyma, and for her previous aid to the Milesian army while they were campaigning with her husband in Bactria-Sogdiana.<sup>51</sup> The Milesian ambassadors were received by Apama herself (referred to as “Apama, the wife of the king”, and “Apama, the queen”). Her son, Antiochus, is also mentioned in the decree; he reportedly sanctioned the building of a city stoa in Didyma and describes the act as “honoring the policy of his father”.<sup>52</sup> It is clearly indicated that the king is the decision/policy-maker and that his family is in solidarity with his will.<sup>53</sup> This situation of a king leaving the queen and heir to govern matters of policy at court while he is away on campaign may parallel that of Laodice III’s regency as will be discussed below.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.2 Laodice I & Berenice Syra

(Laodice I active c.267-236?) (Berenice b. c.285/0 †246)

The historical narratives of the lives of Laodice I and Berenice Syra are intertwined as the catalysts of the Third Syrian War (also known as the Laodicean War, c.246-241). Laodice I, daughter of Achaeus the Elder, was the first wife of Antiochus II Theos and his cousin on his father’s side.<sup>55</sup> She married Antiochus c.267 and produced at least five children: two sons, Seleucus II Callinicus and Antiochus Hierax, and three daughters, Apama, Stratonice, and Laodice.<sup>56</sup> According to Appian and Porphyry, Antiochus married her for love. Later, as a part of the settlement of the Second Syrian War (259-252), Antiochus II also married Berenice Syra

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<sup>51</sup> IDidyma 480=PHI Didyma 8. This decree was set up in Miletus in 299 along with IDidyma 479 by Seleucus’ general Deodamas which honoured Apama’s son, Antiochus I (Mairs 2011, 180). The inscription is associated with the statue base (OGIS 745=IDidyma 113= PHI Didyma 182) mentioned above. Also see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26, Brosius 1996, 199, and Bielman Sánchez 2003, 56.

<sup>52</sup> Antiochus I Soter succeeded Seleucus I in 281/0.

<sup>53</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26

<sup>54</sup> See 2.3 Laodice III, 20-21 and 4.1 The Interim Regents, 53-55.

<sup>55</sup> Plb. 4.51.4; Plb. 8.22.11; Polyæn. 8.50 states incorrectly that Laodice and Antiochus II had the same father (*homopatrimon*), making them half siblings.

<sup>56</sup> The date of 267 is assumed based Seleucus II’s inheritance of the throne at the approximate age of 20 in 246 (Grainger 1997, 47). Polyæn. 8.50 only mentions Seleucus II Callinicus as a child of Laodice I and Antiochus II.

(253/2), the daughter of Ptolemy II.<sup>57</sup> Berenice came with an immense dowry of gold and silver, earning her the title *Phernophorus* (“dowry-bringer”).<sup>58</sup> Laodice I went to live in Ephesus with her children while Berenice Syra resided with Antiochus II in Antioch.<sup>59</sup>

There are ancient discrepancies and modern scholarly debate as to whether Antiochus II formally divorced Laodice I. In the autumn of 254 or spring 253, Antiochus sold an expanse of land to Laodice I that was called Pannoukome, located near her homeland in Western Asia Minor.<sup>60</sup> This was not a mere plot of land, but rather an entire village bordered by Cyzicus and Zelia; it was free of royal taxation, Laodice was free to join it to other cities, and her children could inherit it from her.<sup>61</sup> Laodice is mentioned by name in this record—not as the queen or the king’s wife, indicating that she did not hold the status of queen. The sale of land to Laodice (as well as the evidence from literary accounts) makes it unlikely that Antiochus kept both Laodice and Berenice as full wives and queens concurrently, and probable that there was an expectation (at least amongst the Ptolemies) that Berenice was to be queen, and that her children with Antiochus were to displace his current children as heirs to the throne.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> App. Syr. XI. 65; Por. *FGrH* 43=Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6; Grainger 1997, 14; P.Cair.Zen. 2.59242, a letter dating to c. November/December 253, speaks of boat preparations made in haste for the upward sea voyage of the king’s daughter (Berenice Syra). Grainger (2010, 133) suggests that Antiochus II had already put Laodice I aside before his marriage to Berenice in 252.

<sup>58</sup> Por. *FGrH* 43=Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6. Berenice’s “dowry” included much gold and silver and may have also included the return of Coele-Syria to Seleucid control (Ogden 1999, 129; Will 1982, 241-42), although Grainger (2010, 149) says this is unlikely.

<sup>59</sup> Ogden (1999, xxi) says kings in polygamous royal marriages would need to put distance between their wives because they were rivals for the succession of their children.

<sup>60</sup> OGIS 225 is an inscription indicating the sale of land from Antiochus II to Laodice I (for a translation see Austin 1981, 312-14). The sale was broadcast to the empire on five stelae at the most important sanctuaries near the coast of the Peloponnese (Bagnall and Derow 2004, 49-50). John Ma suggests that this sale of land was part of a divorce settlement. The land was sold to her at a very low price and guaranteed that Laodice had complete ownership of it without the possibility of it later being revoked (Ma 1999, 44).

<sup>61</sup> OGIS 225 (c. May 253); Grainger 2010, 135

<sup>62</sup> Por. *FGrH* 43=Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6 says that Antiochus made Berenice his royal consort while keeping Laodice as a concubine until he later reinstated her as queen out of his love for her. Ager (2006, 175) and Will (1982, 242) both believe that Ptolemy II imposed the marriage of his daughter on Antiochus II. Grainger (2010, 133-35) does not believe that Ptolemy II was dominant over Antiochus II, but rather a mutually agreed marriage alliance sealing a peace treaty. Martinez-Sève (2003, 696) and Coşkun (forthcoming) also deny that the marriage alliance could have been imposed by Ptolemy II, saying that Antiochus II was in fact the dominant party due to Ptolemy’s loss of territories which forced a withdraw of Ptolemaic forces from Asia Minor and the Aegean ocean. Following in

Berenice's downfall occurred soon after her father died, while her brother Ptolemy III was succeeding to the Ptolemaic throne. Jerome writes that Antiochus returned to Laodice, restored her to the status of queen, and reinstated their sons as his heirs.<sup>63</sup> The astronomical diary for SE 66 (246) confirms that Antiochus was with Laodice and their sons, Seleucus [II Callinicus], Antiochus [Hierax], and Apammu, at Esangil (the ancient sanctuary and temple of Marduk in Babylon) prior to his death but not that she was reinstated as queen.<sup>64</sup> Laodice allegedly assassinated him by poison and then ordered the assassination of Berenice and Berenice's young child, Antiochus.<sup>65</sup>

Berenice's son was a very young child or infant at the time of Antiochus II's death.<sup>66</sup> The Kildara inscription, an inscribed letter of the Ptolemaic minister, Tlepolemus, dated to c.246, calls the child "King Antiochus", but this is the only evidence that refers to this child by name or

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the belief that Laodice I was not repudiated, Martinez-Sève also believes that Laodice did not move from Antioch to Ephesus and that she had merely accompanied Antiochus II to Ephesus while he journeyed to visit his important naval base in that city (2003, 702). Grainger (2010, 138) does not believe that Antiochus II would agree to disinherit his elder children from the throne, arguing that it would be unenforceable. According to Athenaeus (245c), Ptolemy II sent Berenice jars of Nile water to increase her fertility. While it's possible that this anecdote about the jars of Nile water may be an invention, it may be an indication it was important for Ptolemy that Berenice bear children, and the importance of her fertility must indicate that he expected her children to inherit the throne.

<sup>63</sup> Por. *FGrH* 43 = Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6; Por. *FGrH* 32. According to Martinez-Sève (2003, 703) Antiochus II's presence at the temple with Laodice I and their children was for the New Year festival whereby the god Marduk was believed to reinvest the king with royal powers. For her, the presence of Laodice's children, and the exclusion of Berenice's son, proves that Laodice's children had their father's favor. Martinez-Sève adds that this must indicate that Seleucus II was named his father's heir. Coşkun (forthcoming) also holds this same hypothesis. Seleucus II was named king in the Babylonian *astronomical diaries* (no.245 obverse B lower edge line 1) immediately after his father's death (month 5 =August 246) which may indicate that he was indeed named the heir apparent by Antiochus II, however, there is no concrete evidence that Antiochus II made any such proclamation (Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 245 B reverse l. 12-13 and B obverse 3-5).

<sup>64</sup> Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 245; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 128; Antiochus was reported to be at Esangil in April-May 246. His death was approximately in August as the record lists month V-VI under Seleucus' rule (Month I=April).

<sup>65</sup> Por. *FGrH* 43 =Jerome's Commentary on Daniel 11.6 says Antiochus II had restored Laodice and their children to their royal status but Laodice orchestrated his poisoning by means of his servants out of fear that he would return to Berenice; App. *Syr.* 65 says Laodice poisoned Antiochus II (presumably herself); Grainger (1997, 14-15) doubts that Antiochus II was poisoned and says that poisoning was too often attributed to deaths by ancient authors. He believes it is likely Antiochus died from alcoholism. His alcoholism is attested in Ael. *VH* 2.41 and Athen.10.438'c-d. Polyaen. 8.50 and Por. *FGrH* 32 do not give a cause for his death; he reportedly "sickened" and died in Ephesus which may indicate he actually died of natural causes (Ogden 1999, 129).

<sup>66</sup> Polyaen. 8.50; Por *FGrH* 43=Jerome's *On Daniel* 11.6

gives him the title of king.<sup>67</sup> In the letter, Tlepolemus gives the names of the ruling family which the Kildarans reportedly supported, having converted their goodwill toward them, presumably from the opposing party of Laodice I and Seleucus II. He names the royal family in descending hierarchy: “King Ptolemy [III]...his sister, Queen Berenice, and King Antiochus, son of King Antiochus and Queen Berenice...”<sup>68</sup> The Kildara inscription proves that there were at least some cities within the Seleucid Empire that accepted and supported the legitimacy of Berenice’s son to rule as king, making her regency successful in some respect, even if the boy was not widely accepted and did not survive to rule.<sup>69</sup>

After Laodice and Seleucus disposed of the rivals to the throne, Seleucus II Callinicus reigned as king—a position he arguably might not have achieved (or held for very long) without her.<sup>70</sup> During the subsequent war with Ptolemy III, Laodice decided to support her younger son, Antiochus Hierax, in an attempt to overthrow his brother. It is unclear why she would choose to do this, but it is likely that Callinicus was no longer malleable and she thought she would have better control over Hierax.<sup>71</sup> Due to her sons’ dependence on her for their succession, and her unwillingness to relinquish her position of power in order to allow her sons to rule as kings in their own right, Laodice I could be categorized as an Incessant Regent. According to Appian, Ptolemy III eventually avenged the deaths of his sister and nephew by killing Laodice during his

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<sup>67</sup> SEG 42, 994; Tlepolemus was from a noble Iranian family and was a Ptolemaic governor (Austin 2006, 465 no. 1); see Blümel 1992 for his discussion on the Kildara decree.

<sup>68</sup> SEG 42, 994 (Frag. A 5-8): In Frag. C 2-4: “making sacrifices on behalf of King Ptolemy and his sister, Queen Berenice and the other gods.” In Frag. D10-13: “so you and all would do well to continue your inclination toward both King Ptolemy and toward his sister, Queen Berenice and her son, King Antiochus (born) from King Antiochus...”

<sup>69</sup> Kildara was part of the coalition against Seleucus II and Laodice and may have been a Ptolemaic partisan for some time prior to 246 (Pleket, Stroud and Strubbe 2013).

<sup>70</sup> See no. 62 for an opposing view of this statement.

<sup>71</sup> Plut. *Morals* 35; Justin 27.2; Plut. *Frat.* 489a; Toye, 2013



invasion, but she was actually still alive when Ptolemy and Seleucus II achieved a peace treaty in 241.<sup>72</sup> The actual year of her death is unknown.

## 2.3 Laodice III

(Ruled c. 221-191)

Laodice III was the daughter of Mithridates II of Pontus and the Seleucid princess Laodice (daughter of Antiochus II and Laodice I). In c.221, she married her cousin, Antiochus III ‘the Great’. Following their wedding, Antiochus proclaimed Laodice queen of the Seleucid Empire in Antioch.<sup>73</sup> Laodice III was largely ignored in literary sources, but her large epigraphic presence indicates that she had some power and autonomy in state affairs, she was a legitimating factor in Antiochus III’s reign, and she was an important and respected queen. She was mother to at least seven or eight of Antiochus III’s children, including Antiochus the Younger, Seleucus IV Philopator, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and Laodice IV, who were associated with the Seleucid throne.<sup>74</sup> Laodice III was the first Seleucid queen to have a state ruler cult established on her behalf (c. 193); this was arranged by her husband, Antiochus III who had also instituted a ruler cult for himself and his ancestors with his offspring as cult participants (c. 208/5).<sup>75</sup> Laodice III was clearly a fruitful queen and was awarded honours (*timai*) in a public decree (c.193) by her

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<sup>72</sup> App. Syr. 65; Lendering 1995-2013

<sup>73</sup> Polyb. 5.43.1-4

<sup>74</sup> Antiochus IV Epiphanes may have also been named Apammu, a name which appears in the Babylonian astronomical diaries (Sachs and Hunger 1988, 69 no. 245; Boiy 2004, 148). Laodice’s other children were Cleopatra (married to Ptolemy V of Egypt), later called Cleopatra I Syra by the ancient historians, Antiochis (married to the king of Cappadocia), Ardys, another daughter whose name is unknown and who was engaged to Demetrius I of Bactria (App. Syr. 5; Schmitt 1964, 13-28), and perhaps a son named Mithridates, although this may have been another name for Antiochus IV (Livy 33.19.9-10; Ogden 1999, 139).

<sup>75</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 117, 202 & 206; Nuffalen 2004, 291; Ruler cults were meant to promote the king’s royal ideology and religious piety, and to maintain the fidelity of the royal subjects who, aside from their religious participation, were far removed from the royal family (Bielman Sánchez 2003, 53; Van Nuffelen 2004, 288). For more on the establishment of the cult for Laodice III and on Seleucid state ruler cults in general, see Van Nuffelen 2004.

husband for her affection (*philostorgia*), devotion (*kedemonia*), and piety (*eusebeia*).<sup>76</sup> The edict was set up in the most widely seen public places within his satrapies.<sup>77</sup>

Laodice III's role as an Interim Regent has been suggested on the basis of her political activity during her husband's temporary absence while campaigning in the east, and due to the heir's age at the time—he was twelve years old at most.<sup>78</sup> Five Babylonian cuneiform texts associate Antiochus the Younger as co-ruler with Antiochus III in the period of c.210/209-193/2 (SE 102-119).<sup>79</sup> In 210/209, Antiochus III left Antiochus the Younger in charge of the empire until 205 to pursue his anabasis in order to secure the eastern portions of his realm.<sup>80</sup>

While Laodice III and Antiochus the Younger seem to have been able to settle some administrative matters on behalf of Antiochus III, the extent of their political involvement during his absence from the capital is unknown. Nevertheless, the empire did remain stable in the king's absence from 209-205.<sup>81</sup> The official portraits of Antiochus the Younger and Laodice III may survive on a jugate seal impression from Seleucia (c. 215/4).<sup>82</sup> Except in the positioning of the

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<sup>76</sup> OGIS 224; These attributes are those expected of a good royal wife within the royal household (Widmer 2008, 79 & 81; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 204-05). A queen's affection for her husband, served as an official motif which both cast her in a positive light, and provided additional reference and prestige to the king himself (Bielman Sánchez 2003, 47).

<sup>77</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 206 & 210

<sup>78</sup> Widmer 2008, 70 and Ramsey 2011, 52; Laodice III married Antiochus III in c. 221. Schmitt places Antiochus the Younger's birth one year later (Schmitt 1964, 13). He would have been about twelve years old in 210. Widmer claims that cult honours rendered to Laodice III in 193 (OGIS 224 *Laodice Prostagma*) by Antiochus III may have been given as thanks for providing a good and appropriate regency over her son while her husband was away in Parthia from 209-05 (Widmer 2008, 75 & 78).

<sup>79</sup> Widmer 2008, 70-71 (See Ma 1999 no. 44, 364-66; IK Estremo oriente 251 = F. Canali de Rossi 2004 no 251); BM 35603 = Austin 1981 no. 138 (See Mayer 1978, no. 66, 458); Schmitt 1964, 13; Robert 1964, 18. Sachs and Wiseman 1954 rev. 2-7, 207; Preceding and following SE 102-119 all documents list Antiochus III as sole king; A co-regency between father and son was first begun by Seleucus I and Antiochus I (Ogden 1999, 117 & 123). Promoting an heir to co-regent during the lifetime of the king helped to secure the succession, to prove legitimacy, and to spread out their rule over their extensive empire by setting up the co-ruling king in his own palace (Carney 2010, 205; Ogden 1999, 68).

<sup>80</sup> Antiochus III acquired Commagene and Judea, and brought Parthia, Bactria, Teos (Anatolia), the northern Arab-Persian gulf and the Middle East back under Seleucid control, earning him the title of Antiochus 'the Great' (Polyb. 11.39 14-6; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 200-1).

<sup>81</sup> Widmer 2008, 75

<sup>82</sup> A second seal impression from 207/6 displays the diademed Antiochus the Younger in the foreground and the portrait of his eldest sister Laodice IV in the background. He married his sister in 196/5 (Iossif and Lorber 2007, 65 & 67).

portraits, the seal resembles jugate coins of the next three Seleucid queens who will be discussed below. The portrait of Antiochus the Younger (approximately six or seven years old) is in the foreground—the dominant position.<sup>83</sup> The positioning of the heir in the foreground of his mother is unique. This is also curious since if Antiochus the Younger only became a co-ruler with his father in 210/9, Laodice was not yet his regent at the date of the seal. Rather than a sign of regency, Iossif and Lorber propose that this seal was probably meant as advertisement by Antiochus III and Laodice III for the acceptance of Antiochus the Younger into the royal cult.<sup>84</sup>

There are conflicting dates for Laodice III's death due to her disappearance and possible reappearance in inscriptions. It is accepted by many Hellenistic scholars that Laodice III died sometime prior to Antiochus III's marriage in Chalcis to his second wife Euboea (c. 193/2) due to the absence of her name in official documents.<sup>85</sup> The documents believed to be the last mentions of Laodice III are the nearly identical prostagmata set up in multiple prominent locations in the empire which decree the institution of cult honours by Antiochus III for Laodice III in c. 193.<sup>86</sup> However, she is later mentioned in a decree dated to c.177/6 under the rulership of Seleucus IV.<sup>87</sup> This raises the possibility that she may have still been alive; although, the two accepted restorations of the fragmentary inscription have led to much debate on the topic.<sup>88</sup> In

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<sup>83</sup> Iossif and Lorber 2007, 65-66

<sup>84</sup> Iossif and Lorber 2007, 66

<sup>85</sup> Aymard 1949, 329; Euboea was a name given to her by Antiochus III. She was the daughter of Cleoptolemus. There is no mention of Euboea after a Babylonian inscription from 187 which recounts Antiochus III's sacrifices and prostrations for the lives of sons and "his wife" at Esangil (Sachs and Hunger 1988, v2 no. 187 and Grainger 1997, 45). She is not actually mentioned by name, she is merely called "his wife". If it had been Laodice III, she would probably have been referred to as Laodice or "the queen". Sachs and Hunger 1988 v2 no. 247 refers to Laodice I by name: "Laodike, the wife..." Since the diaries would normally indicate the proper name of the wife of the king, it is possible that either Euboea's name wasn't known or the wife was not a queen and so her name was not important.

<sup>86</sup> SEG 7, 2; See Robert *Hellenica* 7 1949, 5-29 and pl. I-IV; Holleaux 1930 reprinted in Holleaux 1942, 165-81, also found in Austin 1981, no. 158; There are minor differences in the text which relate to the individual cities or recipients of the prostagmata (Aymard 1949, 328); Prostagmata have been found at Eriza, Kermanshah, and Laodiceia (Iossif and Lorber 2007, 63).

<sup>87</sup> Robert *Hellenica* 7 1949, 5-29 and pl. I-IV. (See Aymard 1949, 333-334); Bielman Sánchez 2003, 48-49.

<sup>88</sup> The opposing translations are by Haussoullier and Robert. For Haussoullier's translation see Cumont 1931, 81-4 no.2. For Robert's translation see Robert 1949, 27-28 = I Estremo Oriente 191. See Ogden 1999, 137; Schmitt 1964,

the prostagmata from 193, and the decree from 177, Laodice III is named with the title of *basilissa*. Euboea was never given this title which could indicate that there was a distinction between a king's wife and a queen.<sup>89</sup> Thus Laodice III was either never repudiated by Antiochus III upon his marriage to Euboea, or she could have returned to court when her son, Seleucus IV, gained his father's favor and was made co-regent in 188, or when he succeeded to the throne as king after the death of his father in 187.<sup>90</sup>

## 2.4 Laodice IV

(Active c.196-182 or 163)

Laodice IV was the daughter of Antiochus III and Laodice III, and the wife of at least one of her brothers—perhaps as many as three.<sup>91</sup> Her marriages marked the first, and perhaps only, sibling unions in the Seleucid dynasty.<sup>92</sup> Her first marriage was to her eldest brother, Antiochus the Younger.<sup>93</sup> Laodice bore a daughter to her brother/husband named Nysa who was later married to Pharnaces I of Pontus.<sup>94</sup> Antiochus the Younger died c.193, having been co-ruler of the Empire with his father, but died before his father, never having achieved the status of sole king.<sup>95</sup> Antiochus III was still alive upon the death of his eldest son and likely arranged

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11-12, Ma 1999, 335; Aymard 1949, 331 & 334, and Iossif and Lorber 2007, 69 for their opposing views on the year of Laodice III's death.

<sup>89</sup> Robert 1949, 29; Ogden sees this as evidence that Antiochus III was a bigamist (1999, 137-38); Bielman Sánchez 2003, 49; Robert 1949, 29: "Marriage and a proclamation of queenship are two different things." Another example is Seleucus I who had first married Apama, daughter of Spitamenes, but later also married Stratonice, daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes. Apama does not seem to have been repudiated or disgraced (Brosius 78 no.72).

<sup>90</sup> Robert 1949, 29; Robert poses the possibility that Laodice was repudiated before Antiochus' second wedding (Robert 1949, 29). For Aymard, the repudiation probably happened very shortly after the death of their son, the co-regent, Antiochus the Younger, but he is reluctant to assume that her repudiation was on account of the death (Aymard 1949, 331 & 334).

<sup>91</sup> Bielman Sánchez 2003, 46; Ogden 1999, 123-24

<sup>92</sup> Another possible instance of incestuous marriage in the Seleucid dynasty was the marriage of Demetrius I and Laodice V (SC II: 153)

<sup>93</sup> App. Syr. 4

<sup>94</sup> Dittenberger 1903 no.771, 532-33

<sup>95</sup> Livy 35.15; Sachs and Hunger 1988, 195 no. 207, 239 no. 198, 253 no. 197, 95 no. 191

Laodice's next marriage to her brother Seleucus IV.<sup>96</sup> She bore three children to Seleucus IV: Demetrius (I) Soter, Antiochus the child-king, and a daughter, Laodice.<sup>97</sup> In 176, the eldest of her sons, Demetrius I, was taken as a hostage in Rome, replacing his uncle Antiochus IV who had been a hostage since the Peace of Apamea in 188.<sup>98</sup>

Laodice's regency would have taken place when she was about forty years old, after the death of her second brother-husband, Seleucus IV, sometime after September 3, 175.<sup>99</sup> A short reign has been attributed to his son, Antiochus the child-king who was roughly four or five years old.<sup>100</sup> The existing material evidence for this regency is in the form of two issues of jugate gold octodrachms that were minted in Antioch, possibly under Laodice's own authority in 175 to commemorate the child-king's *anadeixis* ceremony and succession to the throne.<sup>101</sup> The obverse of these coins displays the jugate portraits of Laodice and Antiochus. Laodice is in the foreground, the position of dominance and authority, although her name never appears on the coins bearing her portrait. Instead, the legend reads: "of King Antiochus." Antiochus is depicted as a young child who bears a remarkable facial resemblance to his mother. He is depicted with

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<sup>96</sup> This is assumed by many scholars on the basis of inscriptions which reveal that Seleucus IV's wife was named Laodice. See SEG 7, 17 = I.Estremo Oriente 190 (SE 136 = c.176) and Musée du Louvre, sale du Mastaba. Inv. A.S. 6758 (Cumont 81-83 no. 3). Cumont asserted that this must be the same Laodice IV, although no further information is available regarding her lineage (1928, 85 no. 4). Holleaux is apprehensive about positively identifying this Laodice since it was a common name (1942, 204). For further discussion on the identity of Laodice IV, see Cumont 1931, 279-85, Robert 1936, 137-52, Robert 1949, 28, and Schmitt 1964, 14 & 20-24.

<sup>97</sup> Le Rider 1986, 414

<sup>98</sup> OGIS 248 (See Austin 1981, no. 162); App. Syr. 45; Eus. Chron. 3 (p 208 Shoene-Peterman's Ed.); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 221

<sup>99</sup> Le Rider 1986, 414

<sup>100</sup> Le Rider 1986, 413 & 415; Savalli-Lestrade 2005, 194; Antiochus reigned between 50-78 days (Le Rider 1986, 416).

<sup>101</sup> SC II: 35-38 and no. 1368 (1638b should read 1368); Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 2; Gold octodrachms were a rare denomination for the Seleucids and it was used mainly for commemoration (Le Rider 1986, 417). Alternatively, the coins may have been issued under the authority of Heliodorus who had arranged the murder of Seleucus IV and may have been trying to rule through Laodice IV and the child-king (App. Syr 45; SC II: 37; Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 24). Heliodorus was driven out of the Empire by Eumenes II and Attalus, and they supported Antiochus IV to take the throne; The *anadeixis* required a public showing of the individual, often by the side of his mother unless it was a case of co-regency during the life of the king. The new king would receive the material symbols of power (diadem, scepter, purple robes) in front of a crowd of witnesses (Le Rider 1986, 417 and Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 125-26); See Le Rider 1999, 189 regarding the rarity of the gold octodrachm as a special issue commemorating the *anadeixis* of Antiochus, the child-king, in jugate position with Laodice IV; In the Ptolemaic empire, the heir would be proclaimed after public support was rallied, and his succession would be celebrated with pageants (Hazard 2000, 123 on the succession of Ptolemy V Theos Epiphanes).

the physical attributes of Alexander the Great, specifically his wavy hair and diadem. Both figures wear a diadem; Laodice's diadem is topped with an adornment of pearls in two rows. Her hair is pulled back into a bun to which a veil is attached in the style of the Tyche of Antioch.<sup>102</sup>

Soon after the start of her regency, Laodice IV married her third brother, Antiochus IV, who, with help from Pergamon, gained enough support to assert his right to rule over that of Demetrius I who was denied the kingship by the Roman senate while remaining a hostage in Rome.<sup>103</sup> Soon after her marriage to her brother, jugate bronze coins of Laodice IV and Antiochus IV were minted in Tripoli (c. 166-165). The inclusion of Laodice's portrait on these coins of the new king reveals that she may have been necessary to promote his investiture as she had been for her son.<sup>104</sup> Antiochus IV adopted Antiochus the child-king and made the child his co-ruler, until he had the boy executed roughly five years later in c.170.<sup>105</sup> Le Rider proposes that Antiochus IV murdered his nephew so that his own son Antiochus (V Eupator) could become the legitimate heir.<sup>106</sup> Laodice IV may have borne a daughter to Antiochus IV—Laodice, who became the wife of Mithridates of Pontus.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Le Rider 1986, 410 & 415 and pl. 21.13-14; Laodice IV is the first Seleucid queen to appear on coinage. Bronze coins with the single portrait of Laodice IV on the obverse and an elephant head and tripod on the reverse were minted by Seleucus IV in Antioch and possibly also under Antiochus, the child-king (*SC* II: 62 & 66). These coins continued to be minted by Antiochus IV with a dotted rim, but without the serrated border (*SC* II: 66 pl. 62 no. 1407i). In Ptolemais -Ake Antiochus IV minted similar coins with an elephant, prow, and monogram on the reverse; these coins regained the serrated rim (*SC* II: 66 pl. 66 no. 1477.2c). Ptolemais also minted half-denomination coins with the bust of Laodice IV (*SC* II: 62 & 66). For the Tyche of Antioch, see *LIMC* VIII: 123 & fig.90 and Politt 1986, 3.

<sup>103</sup> OGIS 248 (see Austin 1981, no. 162); Polyb. 31.2; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 221; OGIS 252; Le Rider 1986, 413; Antiochus IV minted coins which display a sole bust of Laodice (IV), veiled and diademed, on the obverse. An elephant and the legend "of King Antiochus" were struck on the reverse. According to Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 23 the elephant may represent the: "continuing might of the Seleucid Empire" and is "an emblem of military might [that] emphasizes the symbolic importance of the woman."

<sup>104</sup> Bielman Sánchez 2003, 55

<sup>105</sup> Diodorus 30.7.2; Savalli-Lestrade 2005, 194; Le Rider 1986, 412

<sup>106</sup> Antiochus V was born c.173 (Le Rider 1986, 412). He was nine years old when he succeeded to the throne in 164 (App. Syr. 46). He was murdered under the command of Demetrius I two years later (Jos. *AJ.* 12.390). A statue base exists from Dyme (Kato Achaia) c.170-164, on which stood statues of Antiochus IV, Laodice IV, and Antiochus [V Eupator] (OGIS 252; Habicht 2006, 22-23).

<sup>107</sup> A decree of sale from Susa names the wife of Antiochus (possibly Antiochus IV) as Laodice. This decree is located in the Musée du Louvre, salle du mastaba (Cumont 85, no. 4).

There is debate concerning whether Laodice IV did in fact marry her third brother, Antiochus IV, because the astronomical diary for year 181 (SE 30) states that Laodice, wife of king Seleucus IV, met with her husband at Seleucia on the Tigris, and a few days later, “fate carried off the queen” (i.e. she died).<sup>108</sup> If Seleucus IV married another woman, also named Laodice, then it would have been this woman who was regent to the young Antiochus (her step – son) and whose portrait appeared on the jugate gold octodrachms.<sup>109</sup> Whether this Laodice married Antiochus the Younger and Seleucus IV, and gave birth to Antiochus the child-king is not of direct relevance to this study; what is important is that there was nevertheless a Queen Regency enacted for Antiochus the child-king for a short while.

## 2.5 Cleopatra Thea

(b. c.165; †c.121)

Cleopatra Thea, born c.165, was a Ptolemaic princess—the daughter of Ptolemy VI Philometor and Cleopatra II. She was married three times within the Seleucid dynasty and proved herself to be quite fruitful. During her reign, she possessed the epithets “Queen Cleopatra, Goddess of the Good Harvest” as first seen on an inscription from Ptolemaïs (c. 135), and “Queen Cleopatra, Goddess Aphrodite the Beneficent” as seen on an inscription from Salamis.<sup>110</sup> In her first two marriages, Cleopatra was a marriage pawn for her father; however, she arranged her own third marriage—an unheard-of precedent!<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Sachs and Hunger 1988 v2. no. 181: “That month, the 7<sup>th</sup> day, rumour of Laodike, the wife of king Seleucus, came to king Seleucus...fate carried off the queen...” For further information on this discrepancy see Savalli-Lestrade 2005, 195-96 & 199 and Iossif and Lorber 2007, 69

<sup>109</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 2005, 199

<sup>110</sup> SEG 19, 904; SEG 18, 577

<sup>111</sup> Habicht 2006, 222; Ogden (1999, 149) identifies the act as *auto-ekdosis* (i.e. handing oneself over in marriage).

Her first marriage (c.150) was arranged by her father to the pretender Alexander Balas, whom her father supported in order to overthrow the presiding king, Demetrius I Soter.<sup>112</sup> By Balas, Thea had one son, Antiochus VI Dionysus.<sup>113</sup> When relations between Ptolemy VI and Balas wore down, Ptolemy removed Thea from Balas and married her to Demetrius II Nicator who was Balas' rival for the throne (146).<sup>114</sup> Thea and Balas' young son Antiochus VI was put on the throne after Balas' death by the vizier Diodotus Tryphon who seized the young boy (about three years old) and declared himself regent.<sup>115</sup> In c.141, Tryphon had Thea's son killed and seized the kingship for himself.<sup>116</sup> In c.138 Demetrius II went on an expedition into Parthia where he was defeated and held comfortably captive by the king, Mithridates I Phraates II for ten years and married the king's sister, Rhodogune.<sup>117</sup> Thea had three children with Demetrius II: two sons, Seleucus V Philometor and Antiochus VIII Grypus, and one daughter named Laodice.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Alexander claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV (Polyb. 33.18 and Dio. 31.32a). Livy *Per.* 52.10 calls Balas an "unknown man of uncertain lineage (*homo ignotus et incertae stirpis*)". Gold staters were minted in Ptolemaïs in commemoration of their wedding (SC II: 243 no. 1840; 1 Macc. 10.55-58; Jos. *AJ.* 13.81-82). Cleopatra Thea's portrait appears alone on the obverse of these coins, wearing a veil and diadem in the style of the goddess Tyche, with the addition of a *stephane*. On the reverse is a filleted cornucopia (indicative of the Ptolemaic ruler cult), and the title: "of Queen Cleopatra", displayed in the Ptolemaic semi-circular fashion, around the border of the coin (SC II: 243 no. 1840. Ptolemaïs (and later Seleucia on the Tigris, and Antioch) also issued jugate tetradrachms and some jugate bronze denominations of Thea and Balas in commemoration of their wedding (SC II: 210, 243-44 and nos. 1841, 1843-46). Thea's portrait appears in the foreground, in the position of iconographic dominance, bearing the same attributes as the gold staters, but instead of the *stephane*, she wears a *kalathos*, a symbolic basket hat associated with Eastern fertility goddesses, predominantly Tyche, indicating her deification as the goddess (SC II: 243-45 no. 1841; Houghton 1998, 89-93 no. 2-4. The reverse of the jugate coins all display the legend, "of King Alexander" in the Attic linear fashion that was customarily used by the Seleucids.

<sup>113</sup> Dio. 9d, 10.1; App. *Syr.* 67-68

<sup>114</sup> Demetrius II was the son of Demetrius I Soter; Dio. 32.9c; Livy *Per.* 52.9-14; Jos. *AJ.* 13.109-16; 1 Macc. 11.12

<sup>115</sup> Alexander Balas had sent his infant son to an Arab sheik, Diocles (also called Imalku'e or Iamblichus), to keep him safe while battling against Demetrius II and Ptolemy VI (Dio. 9d, 10.1; App. *Syr.* 67-68). Diodotus Tryphon was a likely a high ranking official, and former supporter of Balas (Dio. 33.4a; 1 Macc. 11.39). Tryphon captured Antioch and Syria through the boy by enlisting Demetrius II's defected soldiers (Diod. 32.9d, 10.1 and 33.4a; Grainger 1990 *The Cities*, 157).

<sup>116</sup> App. *Syr.* 68; Livy. *Per.* 55.11: Tryphon claimed that the boy, Antiochus VI Dionysus died during surgery because he suffered from stones in the body.

<sup>117</sup> App. *Syr.* 67; 1 Macc. 14.1-4; After the Battle of Antioch, the defeated Balas sought refuge amongst the Nabataeans. He was either murdered by an Arab named Zabdiel (1 Macc. 11.14), or by his own officers who had made an agreement with Demetrius II (Dio. 9d, 10.1). Livy *Per.* 52 incorrectly says Demetrius II killed Balas in battle.

<sup>118</sup> SEG 19, 904, an inscription from Ptolemaïs -Ake honouring Antiochus VII Grypus names his parents, "Demetrius [II] Soter the great, and Queen Cleopatra Goddess of the Good harvest." Laodice was captured by the



Cleopatra's father was killed before Demetrius II became king, leaving Thea without someone to secure her future. She arranged her third marriage to Demetrius' brother, Antiochus VII Sidetes (c. 138) while she was shut up in Seleucia with her children and Demetrius II was held captive; the reason she did this, Josephus says, was because her friends advised her to do it, and because she was afraid that Tryphon would take over the whole empire.<sup>119</sup> Appian says her decision to remarry was the product of her jealousy regarding Demetrius II's marriage to Rhodogune.<sup>120</sup> Of these two sources, Josephus' logical account is more reliable than the highly moralizing account of Appian. Antiochus VII had been barred from entry into the empire by Tryphon, but as a testament to Thea's power, he was able to enter Seleucia upon her summons. Thea had at least one son with Antiochus VII, Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, but she may have had as many as five children with him.<sup>121</sup> The sources differ on what happened next: either Antiochus VII went to Parthia and demanded his brother's return, or Antiochus VII was attempting to stop Mithridates from releasing Demetrius II to take back the kingship. Antiochus engaged the Parthians in battle, lost, and committed suicide (c.128).<sup>122</sup> Demetrius II was released from Parthia and returned to claim his throne and possibly his queen.<sup>123</sup>

Later in the same year, Antioch had fallen into civil unrest while Demetrius II was preoccupied assisting Thea's mother, Cleopatra II, in her war for the Ptolemaic throne against

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Parthians when her uncle/stepfather Antiochus VII was defeated in battle in c.128. She was then taken in marriage by Pharnaces II of Parthia (Justin. 38.10.10). She is known by scholars today as Laodice V Seleucus of Syria. Antiochus Grypus is also known as Antiochus VIII Epiphanes.

<sup>119</sup> Jos. *JA*. 13.221-22. Thea's "friends" were probably not simply close acquaintances, but rather her *philoï* (for more information on this group, see 3.2 Power and Support, 40).

<sup>120</sup> App. *Syr*. 68

<sup>121</sup> Two girls named Laodice, another son named Seleucus, and yet another son named Antiochus (Por. F 32). On *IDelos* 1547, an inscription honoring Antiochus Cyzicenus, "King Antiochus the Great (i.e. VII Sidetes) and Queen Cleopatra [Thea]" are named as his parents. Por. F 32 (Eus. *Chron.* 3 p. 257 Shoene-Peterman Ed.) says that the two girls named Laodice and one son named Antiochus died of illness. The son named Seleucus was captured by the Parthians when Antiochus VII was defeated in battle. It is not stated whether Cleopatra Thea was the mother of all these children.

<sup>122</sup> App. *Syr* 68; Toye 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Justin 38.10; App *Syr*. 68; Grainger 1990 *The Cities*, 164

her brother, Ptolemy VIII.<sup>124</sup> Silver coins were minted in Antioch with the portrait of a young king named Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>125</sup> It seems that in order to maintain power, Thea assumed regency over one of her sons whom she put forward as future king.<sup>126</sup> There is debate concerning the identity of this child which has been believed to be either Antiochus Grypus, or Antiochus, the young son of Antiochus VII and Thea who reportedly died of illness.<sup>127</sup>

Demetrius II was defeated in the battle of Damascus (c.126).<sup>128</sup> By this time, Cleopatra Thea had established enough individual power to have Demetrius II shut out of Ptolemaïs, leaving him vulnerable to his imminent murder.<sup>129</sup> Appian says that after Demetrius II died, Seleucus V (his son with Thea), tried to assume the throne, but Thea killed him by shooting him with a bow and arrow because she was afraid that he would avenge his father, and because she hated everyone.<sup>130</sup> After this, Thea may have ruled at least a portion of the empire by herself for a brief period (c.126/5). During this period, coins were minted in Ptolemaïs with Cleopatra's sole portrait. She was depicted with a mass of shoulder-length tight tendrils known as *Isis locks* which is otherwise unseen in coinage of other Seleucid queens.<sup>131</sup> The reverse of her coins of 'sole-rule' display her own name and epithet: "of Queen Cleopatra, Goddess of the Good Harvest". While these coins may depict that she had attempted to establish herself as a sole monarch, it is not known if she was accepted as monarch anywhere other than Ptolemaïs.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Justin 39.1-5; Jos. *AJ.* 13.261-68

<sup>125</sup> SC II: 436 & 439 no. 2208-09

<sup>126</sup> SC II: 435

<sup>127</sup> Por. F 32 (Eus. *Chron.* 3, p.237 Shoene-Peternan Ed. )

<sup>128</sup> Justin 39.1.2

<sup>129</sup> Jos. *JA.* 13.268; App. *Syr* 68 attributes this to jealousy over his marriage to Rhodogune; Eus. *Chron.* 3 (p.255 Shoene-Peternan Ed.) says that Demetrius II was shut out of the city but doesn't say who shut him out.

<sup>130</sup> App. *Syr.* 69; Eus. *Chron.* 3 (p.257-59 Shoene-Peternan's Ed.) says that Seleucus died because of his mother's accusations but isn't specific about who or what killed him, and what the accusations were. Similarly, an earlier king, Antiochus I had his eldest son and joint-ruler, Seleucus, executed (c. 267/5) and his son Antiochus II became his joint-ruler and succeeded to the throne instead (Trog, *Prol* 26; Malalas 8.204; See Grainger 1997, 10 & 13).

<sup>131</sup> SC II: 465-67 no. 2258; For *Isis locks* (corkscrew locks) see Walters 1988, 12 and Mattusch 2005, 230-233 for a bronze "Herm-head of a Fleshy Woman with Corkscrew curls" that is believed to be a possible representation of Cleopatra Thea. The herm-head is located in the Villa dei Papiri, Herculaneum.

<sup>132</sup> SC II: 465

Following the issues of her coins of ‘sole-rule’, jugate coins of Thea and Antiochus Grypus were issued (c. 125/4), suggesting that she could not maintain a sole-rule and elevated her son to co-regent in order to maintain her position of power.<sup>133</sup> Thea is depicted in the same manner as her coins of ‘sole-rule’ and occupies the foreground, indicating she was the dominant party in the relationship. Grypus’ portrait is in the Alexander style with wavy hair and diadem. Grypus is depicted with his characteristic “hook-nose” for which he earned his cognomen. The legend on all the jugate issues reads: “of Queen Cleopatra/Cleopatra Thea and King Antiochus.”<sup>134</sup> Grypus would have been about eighteen years old when these coins were first issued—very close to the age of majority (if he was not considered an adult already). Grypus is depicted as an adult on these coins; in fact, he appears taller and larger than Thea. For these reasons, it is likely that the political relationship that Thea had with her son was co-regency, rather than regency, with Thea as the dominant party.

In c. 122/1, at the approximate age of twenty-two, Grypus had legitimized himself as a king by means of the support that he gained in defeating the usurper, Alexander Zabinas, and by taking a wife; a daughter of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II named Tryphaena. Grypus’ military accomplishments and his marriage (that created yet another tie to the Ptolemaic empire) meant that Grypus could rule legitimately on his own.<sup>135</sup> Thea is categorized here as an Incessant Co-regent because of her unwillingness to give up her position of power to allow her son to rule as sole king, and perhaps also an unwillingness for Grypus’ wife Tryphaena (Thea’s niece) to inherit the royal power that Thea held as Grypus’ co-regent. Allegedly, she mixed a cup of

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<sup>133</sup> SC II: 469-81, nos. 2259-77; Considering that Cleopatra Thea married Demetrius II c. 145 and Grypus was not their first child, he was born no earlier than c.143, making him about eighteen years old at most when these coins were first issued. Jos. *AJ.* 13.365. See also SC II: 483.

<sup>134</sup> Tarsus: SC II: 473 no. 2259-60; Cilicia: SC II: 473-74 no. 2261; Antioch: SC II: 474-75 no. 2262-66; Sidon: SC II: 477 no. 2268. Coins of this series minted in Ptolemaic-centric cities or for Ptolemaic audiences such those from Ptolemäis, Ascalon, and Sidon were predominantly minted in the Phoenician weight used by the Ptolemies and would display their legends in the semi-lunar fashion.

<sup>135</sup> Justin 39.2; Tryphaena is called Cleopatra Tryphaena by many scholars; however, the ancient sources never refer to her as Cleopatra. Grypus was about twenty-one years old, born c.144 as calculated from Jos. *AJ.* 13.365. See also SC II: 483.

poison for Grypus to drink, but he discovered her plot and forced her to drink it, killing her.<sup>136</sup>

Cleopatra Thea's co-regency with her son Grypus was short—about 3-4 years as indicated by the halt in production of the jugate coins in c. 121/0, possibly upon the cities receiving news of Thea's death.<sup>137</sup>

## 2.6 Cleopatra Selene

(b. 140/35; †69/8)

Cleopatra Selene and her sons were the last of the ruling Seleucids before Rome put an end to the dynasty in 63. Like Cleopatra Thea, Cleopatra Selene was a Ptolemaic princess, the daughter of Cleopatra III (Cleopatra Thea's sister) and Ptolemy VIII Physcon, her mother's uncle.<sup>138</sup> Selene was married four times. Her first marriage was a wife-swap orchestrated by her mother. She had been given in marriage to her brother, Ptolemy IX Lathyrus, after his forced divorce of their sister, Cleopatra IV (who later became the wife of Antiochus IX Cyzicenus).<sup>139</sup>

When Cleopatra III's relations with her son Lathyrus deteriorated, he was forced to leave Egypt and muster forces against her. Selene was removed from Lathyrus and was sent to the Seleucid Empire to become the wife of Antiochus VIII Grypus (no issue) to solidify Cleopatra III's relations with him out of fear that Lathyrus would join forces with Cyzicenus against her.<sup>140</sup> After Grypus was killed by his chief of staff, Heracleon (c.96), who was attempting to seize the

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<sup>136</sup> App. Syr. 69; Justin 39.2; One is left wondering if this account of the poisoning is true since Grypus was known in the sources for his interest in poison, and he was reportedly tired of his mother meddling in his affairs as king. Justin 39.2: Antiochus Grypus also allegedly tried to poison Antiochus Cyzicenus and Alexander Zabinas (Whitehorne 2001, 162). Eus. Chron. 3 (p. 257 Shoene-Peterman Ed.) says Zabinas poisoned himself. Galen reveals that Antiochus Grypus wrote a treatise on poisons which was copied by Eudemus. The work, except for the short mention by Galen, no longer survives (Kuhn, K. G. *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia* 1826, 14 & 185). It is revealed that Grypus' preferred 'poison' was serpent's venom.

<sup>137</sup> SC II: 470

<sup>138</sup> Whitehorne 2001, 165

<sup>139</sup> Justin 39.2; Cleopatra III of Egypt, mother of Cleopatra IV (Seleucid rule number:III), Selene, and Lathyrus, had forced the divorce of Lathyrus and Cleopatra IV. She then arranged the marriage of Selene and Lathyrus. Cleopatra IV fled to Cyprus and initiated her own marriage to Antiochus IX Cyzicenus.

<sup>140</sup> Justin 39.3-4; Grypus had previously been married to Selene's older sister, Cleopatra Tryphaena who had been killed by Cyzicenus during the war between the brothers. Selene was the fourth and final Cleopatra to reign as queen in the Seleucid dynasty.

kingship (possibly through levirate marriage to Selene), Selene fled to Antiochus Cyzicenus and became his wife.<sup>141</sup> This marriage was short and without issue. After Cyzicenus was killed in battle the same year by Seleucus V Epiphanes (son of Tryphaena and Antiochus VIII Grypus), his son, Antiochus X Eusebes, inherited the kingdom. According to Appian, Eusebes married his step-mother, Selene, who was also his aunt and niece to his grandmother, Cleopatra Thea.<sup>142</sup> Selene was about forty years old when she married Eusebes; he was about seventeen.<sup>143</sup> She bore him two sons, Antiochus XIII Asiaticus, and another whose name is unknown.<sup>144</sup> Eusebes died in battle against the Parthians (c.88) and Selene fled to Cilicia.<sup>145</sup>

Before Selene's son, Asiaticus, could inherit the throne, Grypus' three sons, Seleucus VI, Philip I, and Antiochus XII, succeeded to it first. When Philip I died, King Tigranes II of Cappadocia had gained control of parts of Syria and he placed his governor in the capital of Antioch. Cleopatra Selene had left Antioch prior to this, and it is not known whence she operated; Whitehorne suggests either Ptolemaïs or Seleucia, but Hoover convincingly places her whereabouts in Damascus (c. 84/3) when she began her regency with Asiaticus.<sup>146</sup>

The notion that Selene was a regent to this son is based on the bronze jugate coins that were issued with their portraits sometime between 84/3 and 75.<sup>147</sup> Asiaticus would have been about ten years old in 84 and about twenty-one in 75. There are three different known issues of these coins, all minted in bronze. Each of the coin issues depicts Selene's portrait in the foreground. She is shown with the usual coin attributes for the Seleucid queens, namely the melon coiffure, veil, diadem, and tiara. She wears her veil high on the back of her head in the

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<sup>141</sup> Jos. *JA*. 13.365

<sup>142</sup> Whitehorne 2001, 168. App. *Syr.* 69 states that because Antiochus X married Selene, he was pursued by divine vengeance and was given the name Eusebes (*Pious*) as a joke because of it. Due to divine retribution, he lost his kingdom to Tigranes II of Armenia.

<sup>143</sup> Ogden 1999, 157. Selene was born c.140/35.

<sup>144</sup> App. *Syr.* 70; *SC* II: 613

<sup>145</sup> Jos. *JA*. 13.369; *SC* II: 613

<sup>146</sup> Whitehorne 2001, 170-1; *SC* II: 615-6

<sup>147</sup> *SC* II: 616, no. 2484-86; In this time period, Antiochus Asiaticus would have been between 10-20 years old.

Egyptian fashion.<sup>148</sup> Asiaticus' portrait is depicted in the common Alexander fashion with wavy hair and diadem. On two of the three issues, Asiaticus appears shorter than his mother, indicating that he may have been a child or young adolescent.<sup>149</sup> On one issue, Asiaticus' portrait is approximately the same size and height as his mother's.<sup>150</sup> This coin survives in greater detail than the other two on which the portraits are barely distinguishable. Given Asiaticus' young age at the time of the earliest issues, and the numismatic evidence that Asiaticus was not yet a man, Selene was likely to have been a regent to her son, at least until he reached the age of majority.

All three of the issues were probably minted in the same city, which Hoover ascertained was probably Damascus due to the rare letter formations found in the legends of all three.<sup>151</sup> Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover suggest that Selene may have claimed Damascus after the death of Eusebes and asserted Asiaticus' legitimacy as heir to the throne in that city.<sup>152</sup> These coins are likely to have been issued between 84/3 (after the death of Antiochus XII) and sometime before 75 as Antiochus Asiaticus would have likely achieved his majority at this time.<sup>153</sup> Accordingly, the exclusive minting in bronze reveals that Selene was lacking funds and could also imply that she would have been unable to effectively defend Damascus due to a lack of resources.<sup>154</sup> This period in Damascene history is obscure, and Hoover hypothesizes that Selene may have

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<sup>148</sup> Houghton 1998, 90; Le Rider 1986, 415

<sup>149</sup> SC II: no. 2485 & 2586

<sup>150</sup> SC II: no. 2484; Compare with the coins of Cleopatra Thea and Antiochus Grypus where Grypus appears larger and taller than his mother, indicating that he was a full-grown man (See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 29).

<sup>151</sup> The coins each displayed the usage of broken bar alphas, and squared sigmas which were rare in Hellenistic coin inscriptions but were commonly used for coins of Antiochus XII and Demetrius III in Damascus. The use of cursive epsilons also points to the mint being from Damascus (Hoover 2005, 98). Reverse types of the coins of Demetrius III and Antiochus XII from Damascus also commonly display a tripod, or Apollo holding a branch (Hoover 2005, 99).

<sup>152</sup> SC II: 613& 616

<sup>153</sup> SC II: 615

<sup>154</sup> SC II: 616

succeeded Aretas III at Damascus which may account for Josephus' statement that Selene still ruled in Syria when Tigranes II invaded c.73/2.<sup>155</sup>

After the death of her nephew, Ptolemy XI Alexander (80), Selene evidently felt herself to be the only legitimate survivor of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Selene again attempted to promote the legitimacy of her sons to rule as kings, but this time as kings of Egypt. In 75, she sent her sons by Eusebes to Rome to present their claim as heirs to the Ptolemaic throne.<sup>156</sup> Their hearing was delayed for about two years until it was finally rejected by the Roman senate in 73; the allegedly illegitimate Ptolemy XII Auletes remained on the throne instead.<sup>157</sup> Selene's sons were, however, acknowledged as kings of Syria.<sup>158</sup>

Tigranes seized the opportunity to invade Syria while Selene's sons were away, possibly while Asiaticus was postponed by his interaction with Verres.<sup>159</sup> Selene was captured in Ptolemaïs by Tigranes and held captive in Seleucia Zeugma until she was finally murdered in 70/69.<sup>160</sup> Selene's multiple marriages and role as a levirate king-maker has led Grainger to suppose that Tigranes killed Selene to prevent another from marrying her and gaining the throne.<sup>161</sup> Asiaticus did in fact manage to become king of some remnant of the Seleucid Empire for one year after his mother's death. In 69, Tigranes released his hold of the capital of Antioch to engage in war with the Romans and Asiaticus was reinstated as king there with the people's support. Asiaticus' reign was cut short by Roman interference. He was prevented from ruling the kingdom by Pompey, but Appian said that he managed to continue to rule for one year while

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<sup>155</sup> Jos. *AJ* 13.392; 13.419

<sup>156</sup> Whitehorne 2001, 171

<sup>157</sup> Cicero. *In Verrem*. 2.4.61

<sup>158</sup> *SC II*: 613

<sup>159</sup> *SC II*: 613; Cicero *In Verrem* 2.4.61-68

<sup>160</sup> Strabo *Geo.* 16.749; *SC II*: 613

<sup>161</sup> Grainger 1997, 45

Pompey was elsewhere.<sup>162</sup> Asiaticus had tried to unify the kingdom, but it was nonetheless conquered by the Romans in 63.

Selene's regency is represented in her jugate coinage, and in the sparse mentions of her in ancient literary accounts of the Seleucid kings. The accounts of Appian, Josephus, Strabo, and Cicero reveal that she fulfilled many of the requisites of a Queen Regent. She produced legitimate royal heirs, she promoted their right to rule both the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires, and she managed to secure a throne by gaining control of major cities, Ptolemaïs-Ake and Damascus, in which she generated support and acknowledgement of Asiaticus' right to rule. Selene's regency was successful in its ultimate goal which was to have the heir succeed to the throne, even though she did not live to see its fruition.

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<sup>162</sup> App. *Syr.* 69-70



## CHAPTER 3: Aspects of Seleucid Queenship

From the overview of the lives and careers of the Queens Regent in Chapter 2, it is apparent that the queens had varied experiences and degrees of power. Further, regency was only an occasional aspect of queenship. Thus an understanding of certain aspects of Seleucid queenship in general is vital to discerning the changes in power or functions that a queen may have experienced when she entered into the role of Queen Regent. This chapter is not meant as a survey of queenship and will only delve into aspects of queenship which are relevant to or observed in the ‘regencies’ of the Seleucid queens. Queenship, in the Hellenistic era, was not an official role with set powers and responsibilities; it was flexible and differed according to the personalities of the individual queens and the circumstances in which they lived.<sup>163</sup>

### 3.1 The Precariousness of Marriage

Royal marriage was the gateway through which a royal or noble female could metamorphose into a queen.<sup>164</sup> Daughters of the Hellenistic kings were reared to be queens who would one day tie other vast empires to the ones into which they were born. Seleucid royal daughters were usually married into the other Hellenistic kingdoms founded by the *diadochoi*, or to the kingdoms of local indigenous dynasts as a means of strengthening political alliances with them.<sup>165</sup> By arranging a marriage alliance through his daughter, the king essentially used her as a

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<sup>163</sup> Pomeroy 1990, 11; *Basilissa* was a term achieved by birth or marriage that was not only used for the *Queen Consort*, but was also used to refer to princesses and other royal women (Carney 2010, 202; Dittenberger 1903, no.14, p44; Brosius 1996, 19 & 20; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 43). The title came into use after 306, beginning with Phila, the wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes and soon became widespread in the Hellenistic monarchies. Further details on the establishment and use of the term can be found in Carney 2000, 166, Carney 2010, 202, and Ogden 1999, 19.

<sup>164</sup> Not all wives of the king would necessarily bear the title of *Basilissa* (see Euboea ft. 84 p 21). Laodice III was proclaimed *basilissa* in Antioch in a separate ceremony after her wedding nuptials to Antiochus III in Seleucia-Zeugma (Plb. 5.43.4). For further discussion, see Ager (forthcoming b), 9.

<sup>165</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 124; They were given dynastic queen names such as Laodice, Cleopatra, Berenice, Apama, Stratonice, and Antiochis which further suggests that they were raised to be queens (Ramsey

political pawn and expected her to possess some powers or influence which would be beneficial to himself.<sup>166</sup> In many Hellenistic royal marriage alliances, it seems that a king demonstrated his dominance over another by giving his daughter in marriage to the subordinate one, securing a foothold for himself in the other's empire.<sup>167</sup> For example, Antiochus III reportedly had the expectation that by securing the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V (c.193) she would serve his interests and enable him to gain a foothold in Egypt.<sup>168</sup> Further evidence of this expectation can be seen in Antiochus III's attempt to arrange a marriage between Eumenes II of Pergamon and his fourth daughter who is unnamed in the sources. Eumenes refused her because he suspected that Antiochus was trying to gain all of Asia Minor.<sup>169</sup> Marrying into another dynasty also posed a certain degree of risk to the lives of the new queens. Ogden best illustrates their position when he says that "exogamous unions stranded them (i.e. queens) in the midst of strangers, if not enemies, amongst whom it was difficult to construct influence, and for whom their lives were much cheaper."<sup>170</sup>

Endogamous marriage between cousins was also common in the Seleucid dynasty; Laodice I and Antiochus II were cousins, as mentioned earlier.<sup>171</sup> The Ptolemies were more radical in their endogamy, practicing sibling marriage—a symbolic manifestation of power that reinforced their godly status in order to strengthen and purify their dynasty.<sup>172</sup> There are a few instances of sibling marriage in the Seleucid dynasty, first implemented by Antiochus III. As discussed earlier, Antiochus III possibly married his daughter Laodice IV to two of her brothers

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2011, 517); The pageantry of dynastic marriage alliances began with the marriage of Philip II's daughter Cleopatra, and was adopted by the Hellenistic rulers (Carney 2010, 198).

<sup>166</sup> Carney called them "dynastic go-betweens with enduring ties to the *oikos* of their birth (Carney 2010, 208)."

<sup>167</sup> Brosius 1996, 43-44; Ogden 1999, 35; Ager (forthcoming b) 15-16. The king of the previous Persian Empire, however, held a practice of demanding a marriage between himself and the daughter of a king that he defeated in battle to ensure the future fealty of the opposing king (Brosius 1996, 43-44; Ogden 1999, 35).

<sup>168</sup> Por. 47 = *FGrH* 260

<sup>169</sup> App. Syr. 5; Ramsey 2011, 521

<sup>170</sup> Ogden 1999, 84

<sup>171</sup> See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 15

<sup>172</sup> Ager, 2006, 166

in succession.<sup>173</sup> Ogden asserts that this was meant as a double investiture to secure the legitimacy of his future progeny to rule.<sup>174</sup> Aside from the three possible incestuous marriages of Laodice IV, there is the possibility that the marriage of Laodice V and Demetrius I was a sibling union.<sup>175</sup> The practice of endogamy restricted the families from which a royal wife could be taken, and kept outsiders from gaining a foothold in the dynasty.<sup>176</sup>

In the discussion of the queens in Chapter 2, it has been seen that the Seleucid king at times married additional wives or may have repudiated the one he already had in order to marry another. Antiochus II's sale of land to Laodice I, the conspicuous absence of the title *basilissa* in reference to Laodice, and her change of residence from Antioch to Ephesus are possible indicators that she may have been repudiated when he married Berenice Syra. Seleucus I took an additional wife, Stratonice, while he was still married to Apama, but this does not seem to have affected her status.<sup>177</sup> The most confusing example is the marriage of Antiochus III to Euboea while Laodice III was still alive. Laodice III disappears and reappears in inscriptions over time but seems to have never lost her title of *basilissa*, while Euboea seems never to have gained it.<sup>178</sup> In the Persian monarchies, the closest thing to a queen was the 'king's wife', but the king also had other female companions and fathered children by them as well; however, the legitimate heirs were normally the offspring of the 'king's wife'.<sup>179</sup> It is not apparent whether any of the Seleucid kings were ever truly or regularly polygamous, but it appears that the royal institution

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<sup>173</sup> Ramsay believes that the endogamous marriage of Antiochus III's children, along with Antiochus's titular referral to his wife Laodice III as 'sister' was meant to elevate the Seleucid dynastic power, and was possibly influenced by the Hecatomnid dynasty (Ramsey 2011, 519). See 2.4 Laodice IV, 22-23.

<sup>174</sup> Ogden 1999, 135

<sup>175</sup> McAuley 2011, 31; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 22-25 for more information on her three possible sibling marriages.

<sup>176</sup> Brosius 1996, 35. Carney 1984, 434 & 436

<sup>177</sup> Plut *Demetrius* 31.3-5; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 46; Seleucus I later married his second wife to his son, Antiochus (Plut *Demetrius* 38.1-9).

<sup>178</sup> See 2.3 Laodice III, 21-22 and no. 85.

<sup>179</sup> Brosius 1996, 21

of marriage could fluctuate in its constraints depending on the king.<sup>180</sup> A queen could be repudiated in order for the king to take another, or additional wives could be taken but they would not necessarily be queens. The addition of royal wives and possible repudiation of former ones caused friction in the Seleucid dynasty, a friction in which some of the Seleucid Queens Regent played large roles. As discussed earlier, the Laodicean War was the product of the competition between the wives of Antiochus II to promote their sons to the throne.<sup>181</sup> Almost a century later, Alexander Balas was able to gain the Seleucid throne by claiming to be the son of Antiochus IV.<sup>182</sup>

As demonstrated by the actions of some of the Seleucid kings, queens were viewed as important tokens of legitimacy. For example, Antiochus III increased the public role of his wife, Laodice III, by allowing her a high epigraphic presence. He used the titles ‘queen’ and ‘sister’ to describe her, creating the impression of a co-regency of husband/wife and brother/sister that would showcase Laodice as his dynastic counterpart.<sup>183</sup> While Laodice III was referred to with the unofficial title of ‘king’s sister’, she was not Antiochus’ actual sibling. By implementing sibling endogamy for his children, Antiochus III attached a literal meaning to the title that would now directly related to the legitimacy of the offspring of his children. In this way, Antiochus III used his daughter Laodice as a form of ‘double-investiture’ for his sons who were legitimate by birth, but now, doubly legitimate by marriage.<sup>184</sup> In the second century of the Seleucid dynasty, the roles of queens as important tokens of legitimization increased. Through levirate marriages,

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<sup>180</sup> Most modern scholars believe that the Hellenistic kings were not polygamous, but rather serially monogamous. Daniel Ogden and Rolf Strootman (2011, 80) believe that they, including the Seleucids, were polygamous. Ogden also concedes that the Hellenistic dynasties may have also adopted serial monogamy whereby the king would set aside or “divorce” one wife to take another (1999, ix, xiv, xx). Ogden says that they would not have wanted to be constrained to monogamous relationships as it would limit the marriage alliances that they could make (xvi). Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 126.

<sup>181</sup> See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 16-19.

<sup>182</sup> For more on Alexander Balas see 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 26.

<sup>183</sup> Ogden 1999, 135; Ramsey 2011, 519-20; Strootman 2011, 80 no. 62; Bielman Sánchez (2003, 57) says that the queen humanized the king’s rule and made it more accessible to the subjects.

<sup>184</sup> Ogden 1999, 136; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 50

some of which were acts of *auto-ekdosis*, queens such as Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene acted as ‘king-makers’, in some cases enabling men to be kings who were not next in succession to the throne.<sup>185</sup>

### 3.2 Power and Support

Hellenistic queens and their sons had a symbiotic relationship; the queen’s status was largely dependent on her sons and vice versa. If no sons were produced, a queen could theoretically lose her status or could be repudiated completely in order for the king to take another; although evidence for the repercussions of a queen’s failure to produce sons in the Seleucid dynasty have not been documented.<sup>186</sup> It was necessary for the queen to have *timai* (honours); this was partially achieved through the importance of her family, the quality or quantity of her benefactions, and through the birth of a son.<sup>187</sup> Without a male heir, she could not embody fertility and abundance for the empire as was expected for the Seleucid (and Ptolemaic) queens.<sup>188</sup>

The degree of influence and support that the queen had from her own family and her own *philoï* could determine her power, involvement, and influence as queen.<sup>189</sup> A queen’s success was most greatly dependant on her supporters in times when her career or safety was at risk. Berenice Syra and Laodice I are good examples of Seleucid Queens Regent whose power was augmented (or failed to be augmented) as a result of political and familial relationships that shaped or

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<sup>185</sup> Ogden 1999, 86, 117 & 156; Laodice IV’s marriage to her third brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes allowed him to become co-regent with her son, Antiochus the child-king whom he later murdered to become sole monarch (See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24). Cleopatra Thea’s marriage to Antiochus VII Euergetes allowed him to become king when his brother was captive in Parthia. Thea’s son, Seleucus V, had been next in succession (See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 27).

<sup>186</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 37

<sup>187</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 40

<sup>188</sup> Carney 1993, 318

<sup>189</sup> Carney 1993, 317

changed their positions as queens.<sup>190</sup> Berenice's power stemmed from the support from her family, from Ptolemaic supporters, and from her wealth. When Berenice's father died, she lost her greatest and most powerful supporter and was put at great disadvantage. Laodice was unsurprisingly able to generate a great deal of support in Antioch due to her own previous career in the city (having possibly been moved out of the capital of Antioch where Berenice replaced her as queen and having returned to her homeland of Asia Minor, taking up residence in Ephesus) and due to support from her family in Anatolia.<sup>191</sup> Laodice I had vast local support and Berenice's support was largely grounded in her homeland with the addition of towns that were pro-Egypt.<sup>192</sup> Without Egypt's full support, Berenice fell victim to Laodice I's alleged plans to have her assassinated.

Generally speaking, in terms of the Hellenistic monarchies, the *philoi* assisted the king in decision-making and pronouncements in diplomatic and military matters. The *philoi* were courtiers who held offices such as court officials, magistrates, ambassadors, etc.<sup>193</sup> They had close access to the rulers and could give their opinions or persuade the ruler to action. The queen's *philoi* ("friends") were vital for establishing and maintaining power; some she had in common with her husband, and some were her own.<sup>194</sup> Cleopatra Thea, for example, allegedly invited Antiochus VII to marry her after Demetrius II became captive in Parthia in part because her "friends" had persuaded her to do it.<sup>195</sup>

In the event of the king's death before the royal heir had come of age, the lives and power of the queen and the royal offspring were put in peril. Without a strong network of partisans who supported the queen and her children's right to rule, there was a real possibility of usurpers or

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<sup>190</sup> App. Syr. 11.65; See 2.2 Laodice I & Berenice Syra, 15-18

<sup>191</sup> See no. 62.

<sup>192</sup> E.g. Ptolemais, Soloi, and Kildara.

<sup>193</sup> Strootman 2011, 70-71

<sup>194</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 65

<sup>195</sup> Jos. AJ.13.7

pretenders seizing the throne and undoubtedly putting to death the family of its former occupant. In this event, regency became a necessity to maintain the royal power until the rightful male heir could take control of the empire as king. The Seleucid queens were described to have drawn support and power from a variety of sources including family, the army, and the queen's *philoi*. For example, according to Valerius Maximus' flourished account of Berenice Syra, Laodice I managed to have Berenice's son captured and murdered (c.246) by means of the chief magistrate of Antioch, Caeneus/Genneus.<sup>196</sup> In the Gourob papyrus, Laodice I was the intended recipient of fifteen-hundred talents of silver, sent to her by the strategos (military general) in Cicilia, Artibazus. These funds were seized by the citizens of Soloi who were loyal to Berenice and the Ptolemies.<sup>197</sup>

According to Polyaeus, Berenice's handmaidens were possible members of her *philoi*.<sup>198</sup> Allegedly, when Berenice died from her wounds, her handmaidens, Panariste, Mania, and Gethosyne, were in contact with Ptolemy III as he made his way into Syria.<sup>199</sup> Polyaeus states that in order to aid Ptolemy, they covered up Berenice's death, going so far as to bury her themselves and to install a body double in her place. Because of this, Ptolemy was reportedly able to send out letters and royal decrees to the towns that supported Berenice, alleging that these had been written by her. If these women did exist, their secret contact with Ptolemy indicated that they were probably Ptolemaic women and Berenice's attendants from her homeland, who travelled to Antioch with her upon her marriage to Antiochus II.<sup>200</sup> While this story may be pure fabrication, it at least reveals that there was likelihood that queens were accompanied to their new homes by trusted attendants upon their marriage.

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<sup>196</sup> Val.Max. 10.1

<sup>197</sup> Gourob Papyrus= *FGrH*. 160 BNJ

<sup>198</sup> Polyaeus. 8.50

<sup>199</sup> These names are probably evidence of some artistic license in this story. Their names are Joy/Delight (*Gethosuné*), Madness, Passion (*Mania*), and Best of all (*Panaristé*).

<sup>200</sup> Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 64

### 3.3 Roles of the Seleucid Queen

The Hellenistic dynasties, especially the Seleucid dynasty, may have emulated the Persians and Macedonians in their conception and treatment of royal women to some degree.<sup>201</sup> Persian royal women were important symbols of fertility and dynastic continuance; they played such an important role in legitimization that they usually only married other Persians.<sup>202</sup> These royal women, as well as those from the Babylonian or earlier monarchies of the Near East, had their own wealth and could control their own estates.<sup>203</sup> Many kings even named villages after the queen's items of clothing such as Parysatis' Girdle.<sup>204</sup> They enjoyed public mobility, accompanying the king on hunts, on campaigns as part of the king's entourage, and in his seasonal relocations to the other capitals in the empire.<sup>205</sup> The Seleucid kings also reportedly travelled frequently with the queens and their children. By travelling through the empire, they were advertising their dynastic stability and continuity.<sup>206</sup> Seleucid queens were also reported to have travelled for religious reasons. For example, the Babylonian astronomical diaries recall that Laodice I and Laodice IV travelled to Babylon and were present in the sanctuary of Esangil for the participation in religious rituals.<sup>207</sup>

Of the Persian royal women, the mother of the king seems to have enjoyed a higher status than the rest. In Aeschylus' *Persai*, Atossa, King Xerxes' mother bears the title 'king's mother' (*metor basileus*) and she was distinguished as the most important woman in the royal court.<sup>208</sup> In

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<sup>201</sup> Carney 1993, 318-19 & 321

<sup>202</sup> Carney 1993, 318; Brosius 1996, 189

<sup>203</sup> Brosius 1996, 199

<sup>204</sup> Carney 1993, 318

<sup>205</sup> Brosius 1996, 84, 87 & 90; Lydian, Scythian and Babylonian armies were also accompanied by noble and royal women (Brosius 1996, 91).

<sup>206</sup> Kosmin 2014, 164

<sup>207</sup> Laodice I: Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 245; Laodice IV: Sachs and Hunger 1988 v2, 385

<sup>208</sup> Brosius 1996, 17, 20 & 24; This is confirmed by the Persepolis Fortification tablets where the unofficial title "mother of the king" seems to have been highest amongst royal women, followed by "wife of the king," implying a hierarchy amongst Persian royal women (Brosius 1996, 186-87). An archive of the tablets can be found at: <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/pfa/>.



the Seleucid kingdom, rather than cities being named after the garments of royal women, they were named after the women themselves such as the many Laodiceas and Apameias.<sup>209</sup> Like Persian royal women, some Seleucid queens (or former queens) such as Laodice I, were able to own land and control their own wealth.<sup>210</sup> In the first century of the Seleucid dynasty, the queen could enjoy as much or as little power as the king wished. She could influence the king in matters of policy, she could be delegated powers by the king regarding nutritional, familial, and women's issues, or she could act as stand-in monarch while the king was away on campaign as seen with Apama and Laodice III.<sup>211</sup>

The royal Macedonians may have been more restrictive in the visibility of their royal women. As noted by Carney, the account of Amyntas I's feast in Herodotus 5.17-21 reveals that royal women in Macedonia would not typically be present when male guests were in the palace.<sup>212</sup> However, Herodotus' story of Amyntas I's feast was written as a moral and cautionary tale about the dangers of including women in male activities and is not necessarily a faithful depiction of Macedonian or Persian customs. By the fourth century in the Macedonian court, royal women such as Olympias and Cleopatra (the mother and sister of Alexander the Great) were still excluded from the drinking parties of the king; however, they personally knew some of the influential men in Philip II and Alexander's courts and even had private correspondence with them.<sup>213</sup> In 331/0 Cleopatra, while Queen Regent in Epirus (c.334-330/29), received an Athenian embassy; she authorized the transport of grain to Corinth.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> This practice was begun by Cassander (Antipatrid dynasty) in ca. 316 (Carney 2010, 201).

<sup>210</sup> OGIS 225; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 58; See. 2.2 Laodice I & Berenice Syra, 16

<sup>211</sup> For more information on queens standing in for absent kings, see 2.1 Apama , 14-15, 2.3 Laodice III, 20-21, and 4.1 The Interim Regents, 53-55.

<sup>212</sup> Carney 1993, 314

<sup>213</sup> Carney 1993, 314

<sup>214</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 51

Seleucid queens, at times, also engaged in official diplomatic correspondence with officials, received ambassadors, and bestowed some fiscal benefactions. The city for which there is the highest number of attestations of contact with the Seleucid queens is Miletus. Apama met with Milesian ambassadors while Seleucus I was on campaign in Bactria-Sogdiana.<sup>215</sup> Laodice III may have accompanied Antiochus III in his reception of ambassadors from Teos and was reportedly eager to bestow benefactions to the city.<sup>216</sup> When she was queen, their daughter, Laodice IV received ambassadors from Miletus on different occasions. On one occasion, Laodice IV even granted *ateleia* to Miletus on behalf of her brother/husband, Antiochus the Younger, while he was co-ruling with his father, Antiochus III.<sup>217</sup>

The reception of ambassadors often resulted in an exchange of favours and honours. According to Bielman Sánchez, the queens were in charge of understanding the plights of the people and bringing these to the attention of the kings and royal heirs.<sup>218</sup> Of her own accord, but with credit to the king, the Seleucid queen would often provide humanitarian benefactions related to food, marriage, or familial matters. The queen's benefactions reveal that she had access to administrative personnel and authority for spending, but she had limited access to finances.<sup>219</sup> Benefactions were typically given in kind, in the form of grain or wheat. Financial gifts were typically generated from revenue accrued from the sale of food items donated by the queen.<sup>220</sup> For example, Laodice III bestowed ten thousand Attic medimnoi of wheat (one thousand medimnoi per year for ten years) to the devastated city of Iasos. She gave the city

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<sup>215</sup> IDidyma 480=PHI Didyma 8; See 2.1 Apama, 14-15 and 4.1 The Interim Regents, 53-55.

<sup>216</sup> Ma 1999 no.17, pp. 308-11 lines 36-40 (See Ramsey 2011, 515)

<sup>217</sup> Herrmann 1965, 73 no. 33 = SEG 36, 1046, Block II & III, lines 1-4, 83. Laodice is not mentioned by name. From the dating of the inscription, the Antiochus in the inscription is believed to be Antiochus IV. He is referred to as "her brother Antiochus"; 'her' being the person who grants *ateleia* (tax exemptions) to Miletus. For this reason, she is believed to be Laodice IV.

<sup>218</sup> Bielman Sánchez 2003, 57

<sup>219</sup> In Iasos 4 (available in Ma 1999, 329-330 no. 26), Laodice III says that she has written to the administrator Strouthion, and instructed him to send wheat to Iasos (col A. lines 15-17).

<sup>220</sup> Pomeroy 1990, 11. Pomeroy says that Hellenistic queens could provide benefactions from the revenues of a single city, or from royal revenues. The Seleucid Queens Regent only gave gifts of wheat, or monetary funds from revenues.

precise instructions for the sale of the wheat, indicating that a fixed amount of funds from the revenues were to be donated for the dowries of daughters from needy families.<sup>221</sup> In exchange for benefactions, the cities bestowed honours on the royal family, setting up decrees that expressed the generosity that they received, extending the royal family's 'visibility' outside the court and across the empire.

Many Hellenistic royal women had a military aspect to their careers. The Macedonian Cynanne actively participated in battle, Adeia Eurydice addressed the armies, and Olympias was present on some military campaigns; she reportedly relied on military protection and had some military command after the death of Alexander.<sup>222</sup> In the Antigonid dynasty, Phila (wife of Demetrius I Poliorcetes) was the first royal woman to have direct contact with the military. She was in charge of the burial of dead soldiers and was a judge and disciplinarian for trouble-making soldiers within the camp.<sup>223</sup> The Seleucid queens also supported the army and military campaigns from court. Apama did not join Seleucus I's campaign, but she did give aid to the Milesian army that had been campaigning with her husband.<sup>224</sup>

During their careers, some Seleucid queens such as Berenice Syra, Laodice I, and Cleopatra Thea had amassed great military support. Berenice Syra and Laodice I were kept well-informed of threats, shipments of money/supplies, and the whereabouts of their rivals by military soldiers.<sup>225</sup> The military's support for Cleopatra Thea is indicated by Josephus who relates that soon after Demetrius II's capture in Parthia, Diodotus Tryphon's soldiers had defected from him and joined the side of Cleopatra (c.138).<sup>226</sup> Cleopatra is again displayed to have had great

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<sup>221</sup> Iasos 4, col A lines 15-25 (available in Ma 1999, 329-30 no. 26).

<sup>222</sup> Carney (*Olympias* 1987, 51) attributes the military aspect of the Hellenistic queens as having begun in the Late Argead dynasty.

<sup>223</sup> Diod. 19.59.1-5

<sup>224</sup> IDidyma 480; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 26

<sup>225</sup> BCHP 11 (Ptolemy III Chronicle); Polyae. 8.50; *FGrH*. 160 BNJ (Gourob Papyrus)

<sup>226</sup> Jos. *AJ*. 13.221

military support in her ability to shut Demetrius II (the king) out of Ptolemaïs after his defeat by Alexander Zabinas, allowing for him to be captured and killed by his enemies.<sup>227</sup>

As discussed earlier, three of the Seleucid Queens Regent had their portraits on coins; one of the main functions of coins was to pay the army. The ruler's coin portrait provided a tangible and moveable token and image of the ruler and royal commander to whom the army should show their allegiance.<sup>228</sup> Cleopatra Thea's position of dominance on the majority of her coinage implies that she was in control of the empire. The coins of Laodice IV issued by Seleucus IV (continued through to Antiochus IV) depict the military symbol of the elephant on the reverse, suggesting that these coins were meant to be distributed to the military and that the queen embodied some aspect or symbolism that was of importance to the military, although it is not clear what the queen's association with the elephant may be.<sup>229</sup>

The Queen Regent for whom there is most source testimonia of contact with the military is interestingly Berenice Syra, even though she was basically a prisoner in her own city. The Gourob Papyrus (pro-Ptolemaic propaganda) recounts that Berenice had the military command to launch a fleet of fifteen ships to attack Soloi before Ptolemy III reached Syria in 246.<sup>230</sup> Not only did she (presumably) have command of some local armies, she also reportedly hired Galatian mercenaries to guard her when she was forced to shut herself up in the fortress at Daphne.<sup>231</sup> Berenice was so well-guarded that the palace could not be penetrated by force;

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<sup>227</sup> Jos. *AJ.* 13.268

<sup>228</sup> Smith 1988, 14

<sup>229</sup> *SC* II 2008, 13 & pl. 1318, 1371, 1407, 1421, 1422 & 1477; The elephant was a symbol associated with Seleucus I Nicator, "the elephant commander (*elephantarchos*)," for the five hundred war elephants he received from the Indian king, Sandrocottus/Chandragupta (Strabo 15.2.9; Plut. *Demet.* 25.4). In a private correspondence with Dr. Craig Hardiman, he stated that the use of the elephant may simply be used as "a continuation of intelligible iconography."

<sup>230</sup> Gourob Papyrus= *FGrH.* 160 BNJ

<sup>231</sup> Hired mercenaries indicate that she was in need of extra reinforcements whose loyalty could be bought. Either Berenice did not trust the local troops, or she had already lost many of her supporters.

however, Laodice's supporters were finally able to gain access to Berenice, allegedly through her physician, and killed her.<sup>232</sup>

The symbolic attributes of the Seleucid queen were tied to fertility and prosperity. The perpetuation of a dynasty could not be achieved without women to carry the new kings within their wombs. Thus women were recognized for their fertility and ability to carry and bring forth new life. Ptolemaic and Seleucid queens were considered patrons of prosperity and fertility in both the biological (succession and legitimization) and agricultural/economic sense. Tyche, the goddess of mutability, fate, and agriculture, became an important goddess for these queens to such a degree that the queens embodied Tyche on their coin portraits.<sup>233</sup> Aphrodite was honoured in some of the cults established in honour of Seleucid queens (like that of Laodice III) as a patron goddess associated with marriage and motherhood; she was the mother of Eros and also a goddess of sexual power.<sup>234</sup> Laodice's epithet, "Queen Laodice Aphrodite" can be seen in an honorary decree (c.195-193) issued on behalf of Antiochus III and Laodice III from the city of Iasos.<sup>235</sup> Laodice was probably in her mid to late forties, but she was symbolically assimilated with Aphrodite nonetheless in promotion of her roles as a wife, mother, and benefactress.<sup>236</sup> The inclusion of *Isis locks* on Thea's later coin portraits (sole-rule and later), combined with the melon coiffure and veil that was commonly employed for the queens' assimilation to the goddess

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<sup>232</sup> Polyæn. 8.50; Justin 27.1

<sup>233</sup> Matheson 1994, 19-20; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 23-24, 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 26 no. 112 & 28-29, and 2.6 Cleopatra Selene, 31-32

<sup>234</sup> Ramsey, 2011, 518; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 56; For more on the association of Aphrodite with the Hellenistic queens, see Pomeroy 1990, 31-34

<sup>235</sup> SEG 26, 1226 = Iasos 4: see col. II, text B, lines 33-110 (available in Ma 1999, 331); Blümel 1985, 19-23; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 127; Laodice was honored by cities which received her benefactions by making her the centre of ritual related to women in the cities (Ramsey 2011, 510). Phila, wife of Demetrius I Poliorcetes received posthumous worship as "Phila Aphrodite". Her public cult was established in c.307. After Phila, it was common to associate royal Hellenistic women with Aphrodite in their cults (Carney 2010, 201). Stratonice, wife of Antiochus II Theos was honoured with the establishment of a cult for "Stratonice Thea" and the sanctuary of Aphrodite Stratoniceis (Austin 1981, 1. 5-15).

<sup>236</sup> Blümel 1985, 23 & 26

Tyche, imply her divine status as both Isis and Tyche.<sup>237</sup> Isis was associated with motherhood and the perpetuation of family—especially the Ptolemaic royal family.<sup>238</sup> Associating royal women in public cult gave them an institutional and public role.<sup>239</sup> The diplomatic benefactions of the queens also reinforced their connection with marriage and the family unit.<sup>240</sup>

A queen's power was partly dependent upon receiving *timai* which were bestowed and advertised via honorary inscriptions. The honorary inscriptions for the Seleucid queens advertised their merit for honours due to their loyalty to the king, their benefactions, and their religious piety. The *Laodice Prostagma* is one such example of honours given to the queen, this time ordered by the king, on behalf of her affection (*philostorgia*), devotion (*kedemonia*), and piety (*eusebeia*).<sup>241</sup> A fountain in the agora at Teos was dedicated to Laodice (c.203) for her piety to the gods and her kind disposition to mankind.<sup>242</sup> The fountain was used for ritual libations by priests, priestesses, and citizens. Brides were to use the water from the fountain for bathing. The specific mention of the use of the fountain for brides enforces Laodice's roles as a patron of marriage, fertility, and the family unit.<sup>243</sup> The queens proactively advertised their piety to the empire by engaging in the establishment or advancement of religious cults—old and new. In an inscription from Miletus (c.299), Apama sanctioned the building of a sanctuary in Didyma

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<sup>237</sup> For the coiffure of Isis, see Walters 1988, 12. For examples of representations of Tyche, see *LIMC* VIII: fig. Tyche 10, 18-21, 28-31 & 37-38.

<sup>238</sup> Jones 2012, 168

<sup>239</sup> Carney 2010, 202-03

<sup>240</sup> Bielman Sánchez 2003, 57; See 2.1 Apama, 14-15 for Apama's benefactions to Miletus found in IDidyma 480 and 3.3 Roles of the Seleucid Queen, 45 for Laodice III's benefaction of grain and marriage dowries in SEG 26, 1226.

<sup>241</sup> OGIS 224

<sup>242</sup> Ma 1999, no. 18 lines 64-83

<sup>243</sup> Ramsey 2011, 514; Individuals using the fountain dedicated to Laodice were instructed to wear white and to wear crowns (Ma 1999, no. 17).

while her husband was on campaign.<sup>244</sup> A bronze statue was also dedicated to Artemis by Apama in Didyma, for which only the statue base with its dedicatory inscription survives.<sup>245</sup>

During his career, Antiochus III established living ruler cults for himself, his ancestors (*progonoi*), and his wife, Laodice III. Laodice III was honoured with the most cult statues and inscriptions of all the Seleucid queens.<sup>246</sup> In the cult for Laodice (c.193), the chief-priestesses were instructed by Antiochus III to wear crowns with miniature portraits of Laodice.<sup>247</sup> The children of the king and queen could take on prominent roles in the royal cults of their parents. As a maiden, Laodice IV was the chief-priestess in her mother's cult in Media.<sup>248</sup> Divine epithets were a means of advertising the divine status of the queen and for use in her cult. Laodice III was given the cult title of "Queen Aphrodite Laodice" in an inscription from Iasos.<sup>249</sup> On an inscription in honour of the family of Antiochus VII, and on her coins of sole rule, Cleopatra Thea is addressed with the cult title, "Goddess of the Good Harvest/Fruitful Season".<sup>250</sup> She is also called "Goddess Aphrodite the Beneficent" on an inscription in honour of Antiochus VIII Grypus as a posthumous reverential reference to the queen.<sup>251</sup>

The roles of Seleucid queens in civic cults increased their royal powers and their visibility within the empire. The more active, pious, and beneficent the queen, the more honorary decrees were set up in the most conspicuous places in the cities, and the more loyalty that the

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<sup>244</sup> IDidyma 480 = PHI Didyma 8; Bielman Sánchez 2003, 56

<sup>245</sup> OGIS 745=IDidyma 113= PHI Didyma 182

<sup>246</sup> An honorary decree from Teos (c. 204/3) instructing the erection of cult statues of Antiochus III and Laodice III to be placed next to the statue of Dionysus (Ma 1999 no. 17; Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming) 10); Cult dedications at Sardis, and Sidon (Ma 1999 no.2 and Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 11-12); the Laodice Protagmata (See 2.3 Laodice III, 21) an honorary decree for Antiochus III and Laodice III from Iasos (Ma 1999, no. 26B).

<sup>247</sup> Ma 1999 no. 37; Walbank 1981, 216; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 205; Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 10

<sup>248</sup> Austin 1981, no. 158 = Robert, *Hellenica* 7 (1949), 5-22

<sup>249</sup> Ma 1999 no. 26B

<sup>250</sup> SEG 19, 904

<sup>251</sup> SEG 18, 577; SC II: 466

royal family would gain throughout the empire.<sup>252</sup> The Teians, on their honorary inscription indicating the establishment of a fountain to Laodice III, state that the fountain would be set up so that Laodice's honours would be remembered for all time and would be seen by foreigners entering the city.<sup>253</sup> Thus cult honours advertised the beneficence and power of the queen beyond the confines of the empire and created a lasting memory of her.

Concerning the Queens Regent, the evidence strongly suggests that Laodice I, Berenice Syra, Laodice III, and Cleopatra Thea all managed to assert themselves politically and at least semi-independently in their careers. While their husbands were alive, they were subordinate to them, with the occasional exception of Cleopatra Thea and one might also name Laodice I who allegedly murdered her husband, although this is unlikely.<sup>254</sup> Laodice III enjoyed the elevation of (at least some) administrative and political duties after Antiochus III's anabasis and during his campaigns in the Aegean as seen in inscriptions; however, she always specified in her letters that she was acting in accordance with her husband in matters of policy.<sup>255</sup> In contrast to Laodice III, Cleopatra Thea was often at odds with her husbands and sons.<sup>256</sup> Thea and the other Seleucid queens could not maintain sole power for themselves, likely because the people would not approve.<sup>257</sup>

The power, dominance, and visibility of the late Seleucid queens (Cleopatra Thea, Cleopatra IV, Tryphaena, and Cleopatra Selene) have led many scholars to wonder whether their actions were characterized by their Ptolemaic upbringing. Bevan, Macurdy, and Ogden estimated that the Ptolemaic-born Seleucid queens brought Ptolemaic customs with them into the empire,

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<sup>252</sup> Ramsey 2011, 515

<sup>253</sup> Ma 1999, no. 18 lines 64-68

<sup>254</sup> See 4.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 17 and 4.5 Cleopatra Thea, 27-28; Hazzard (2000, 101-159) claims that later Ptolemaic queens became greater than their husbands.

<sup>255</sup> Note in particular, SEG 26 1226, Letter of Laodice III to Iasos.

<sup>256</sup> See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 25-30.

<sup>257</sup> Hazzard, 2000, 101; Alexander the Great reportedly told his own mother Olympias that the people (Macedonians) would never accept a female monarch (Plut. *Alex.* 68.5). See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 28-29 concerning her period of 'sole-rule'.



causing a shift in the power and dominance of the Seleucid queens to be more akin to the type of political power that was enjoyed by Ptolemaic queens.<sup>258</sup> In reference to the Macedonian court, yet applicable to the other Hellenistic dynasties, Pomeroy explains that the prominence of royal women and the elevation of their power were often increased during a breach in male rule or when the empire was in transition or turmoil—precisely the circumstances for which a regent would be required.<sup>259</sup> Circumstances such as these occurred more and more frequently for the late Seleucids and as a result, queens found themselves having to be adaptable and resourceful in order to maintain the kingdom.

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<sup>258</sup> Bevan 1902, 2.212; Macurdy 1932, 99; Ogden 1999, 117; For further discussion on this topic see Alex McAuley's *Appendix I: Seleucid Royal Women* p.6 at [www.seleucid-genealogy.com](http://www.seleucid-genealogy.com).

<sup>259</sup> Pomeroy 1990, 9

## CHAPTER 4: Queen Regency

In general, a Seleucid queen might achieve the greatest power of her career after a son succeeded to the throne as she could potentially have greater political influence over a son than over a husband. In a few cases, Seleucid queens achieved an even higher level of power for a short time as Queen Regent. In the Seleucid Empire, a queen would not be accepted as the sole monarch—not for very long at least.<sup>260</sup> However, in the absence of a king, and if the royal heir was too young to govern the empire on his own, the queen herself could rule directly on his behalf. Her inability to rule on her own, and her biological tie to the heir made the queen the optimal regent for the heir as she would be likely to have her son's life and interests at heart.<sup>261</sup> There are, of course, queens who were significant exceptions to this statement for whom the lives of their children were less important if they impeded the queen's power. The most notable examples of this are Laodice I who later supported her son Antiochus Hierax to attempt to overthrow Seleucus II and Cleopatra Thea who allegedly murdered her eldest son Seleucus V and also allegedly attempted to murder Antiochus Grypus. If the queen did not occupy the role of regent for a minor son, there would be the potential for male rivals to become regent themselves and rule through the boy-king. This often resulted in the boy's murder when the usurper had enough support to rule without him. Our chief examples of this are Antiochus IV's co-regency with and murder of Antiochus the child-king and the capture, and eventual murder of Antiochus VI Dionysus by Diodotus Tryphon.<sup>262</sup>

'Queen Regent' was not an official title or office in the Seleucid Empire—the queens were certainly never called by any title that resembles regent during their lifetimes. Queen

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<sup>260</sup> Cleopatra Thea may have attempted a period of sole rule c.126/5 but associated her son Grypus with her on the throne shortly after, presumably because she did not have enough support to rule alone (See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 28-29).

<sup>261</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 37

<sup>262</sup> App. Syr. 68; Livy *Per.* 55.11; Dio 30.7.2; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24-25 and 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 26.

Regency was more akin to an addition of powers and responsibilities that a queen had to take on in order to preserve the empire and dynasty in the absence of the king. As such, there is no real job description for the Queen Regent. There is only a set of patterns and anomalies that can be extracted from the careers of each queen. Each regent faced different situations to which she had to adapt, and for this reason Queen Regency seems to have been a fluid institution that differed depending on the queen and the circumstances in which she lived, an institution that was never formally recognized. The categories of regents in this study have been devised to account for the fact that regency was not a set career, and that there are multiple reasons and functions that could define a queen as a regent. The structure of this study has been inclusive of all Seleucid queens who may have ruled the empire on their sons' behalf or who exhibited the functions of a regent in the absence of the king. As seen in Chapter 2, many of the queens are considered regents based only on sparse evidence or conjectures. There are many problems associated with the consideration of whether a queen can be considered a regent; these will now be discussed in further detail.

#### **4.1 The Interim Regents**

When a king went on campaign, his heir could be considered king in his absence, but if the heir was a child, someone had to administer the empire on his behalf. The most trusted individual to enter this role would have been the queen with the help of the king's advisors.<sup>263</sup> Interim Regents were free of many of the dangers that the other regents faced because the king remained alive, and although unavailable, he still maintained networks that would help to protect his family. Interim Regents were aware that they would be returning to their original duties when the king returned and there is no evidence that they did so unwillingly. Apama and Laodice III

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<sup>263</sup> Strootman 2011, 79; Carney *Olympias* 1987, 37

have both been identified as Interim Regents because of the possibility that they ruled for or with their sons while their husbands were on campaign.

Apama's son was about sixteen years old at his father's departure (307-305) which indicates that Apama may have been regent to her son; however, there is no further evidence for this regency, resulting in an inconclusive result concerning its existence. Laodice III's son, Antiochus the Younger, was co-king and figurehead of the empire during his father's anabasis from c.210-205. He was called king in all official documents that mentioned him; however, he was too young to rule on his own—he was only about twelve years old.<sup>264</sup>

Epigraphic evidence for both Apama and Laodice III suggests that they both were involved in politics including the reception of ambassadors and the bestowal of religious benefactions. Apama's reception of Milesian ambassadors, her aid to their mercenary detachment that was campaigning with Seleucus I in Bactria-Sogdiana (c. 307-305), and the authorization of the building of a temple (all found in the same inscription c. 299), are indications that Apama was an active benefactress who held some political authority.<sup>265</sup>

Laodice III has a substantial epigraphic presence about a decade after her proposed regency. She is documented making benefactions and being honoured in decrees concerning the royal cult in her honour. However, there are no surviving inscriptions or decrees during her 'regency'. On a stele dated to 205, shortly before Antiochus III's return, an official letter written by Antiochus the Younger to the Magnesians is inscribed on which calls himself "King Antiochus" without any mention of his mother, Laodice.<sup>266</sup> The absence of his mother's name can indicate that she was not, or was no longer his regent, or that by the end of the regency, he had gained authority to perform certain functions autonomously. The epigraphic documents

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<sup>264</sup> See BM 35603 = Austin 1981 no. 138, Livy 35.15, Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 207, 198, 197, and 191.

<sup>265</sup> IDidyma 480 = PHI Didyma 8; See 2.1 Apama, 14-15

<sup>266</sup> IK Estremo oriente 251 = F.Canali de Rossi 2004 no. 251

concerning Laodice III indicates that she was evidently a well-respected queen. Antiochus III boasted her enviable qualities to the empire, creating the impression that she was an equal partner to him (beware, impressions are not always realities) so there is a possibility that Antiochus III may leave her in charge of some administrative affairs and as regent to their son, but a lack of evidence for her activity (literary, epigraphic, numismatic, etc.,) during Antiochus III's anabasis makes her regency inconclusive.<sup>267</sup>

## 4.2 Unsuccessful Regencies

Unsuccessful Regencies are categorized as such because the regency did not result in the heir achieving kingship at the age of majority. In this respect, two Seleucid queen regents were unsuccessful in their goals, Berenice Syra and Laodice IV, whose sons died in childhood.

Berenice Syra's regency began and ended in a single year, 246, when her husband Antiochus II died. The prior death of Berenice's father created the loss of her political advantage and she was forced to enter into a dynastic war between herself and Laodice I who was each trying to ensure their own son's succession to the throne.<sup>268</sup> The Kildara decree which calls Berenice's son "King Antiochus" reveals that she had some success in gaining support for his succession.<sup>269</sup> However, there is no evidence that any other city also accepted the boy as king, and he was not included in the Babylonian king list. Berenice's son was kidnapped and murdered in the same year by Laodice's faction. The literary sources reveal that Berenice went to great lengths to retrieve the boy but failed.<sup>270</sup> Also, if the record preserved in Polyaeus and Valerius Maximus is correct (sources' whose information seems to be more romantic than historical), his

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<sup>267</sup> See 2.3 Laodice III, 20-21.

<sup>268</sup> See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 17-18.

<sup>269</sup> SEG 42, 994; See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 17-18

<sup>270</sup> Val. Max. 9.10; Polyaeus. 8.50; for further details see 4.4 Functions of the Queen Regent, 62.

kidnapping suggests that Berenice had sent the boy somewhere else, likely for his safety, as he was not taken from his mother's arms. Berenice's regency was unsuccessful as her son never succeeded as king of the Seleucid Empire; however, she did exhibit the functions of a Queen Regent in her attempts to promote her son to the kingship, to advertise to the populace his right to rule, and her attempts at securing his safety.

Laodice IV's regency was also short; her regency over her son, Antiochus 'the child-king' began after the death of her husband, Seleucus IV, in 175. The existence of this regency is only known to us through the issuance of jugate coinage of Laodice and her son, possibly issued not only to promote her son as heir, but also to gain support for her regency.<sup>271</sup> Laodice gave up her regency a short time later when she married Antiochus IV who made himself the boy's co-ruler. By relinquishing her regency, she essentially sacrificed her child because about five years later, Antiochus IV allegedly had the boy murdered.<sup>272</sup> Her son Antiochus was about eight years old at this death; he is not recognized as a king in the Babylonian king list.

### **4.3 Incessant and Repeat Regents**

Both Laodice I and Cleopatra Thea have been identified here as Incessant Regents for their alleged unwillingness to relinquish their political power when their sons became king. Laodice I, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene are all Repeat Regents as they either were regent multiple times or had performed actions associated with regency for other sons in the attempt to promote them to a kingship.

Whether Laodice I was Queen Regent for her son, Seleucus II, is debatable for multiple reasons, the first being that when her regency would have taken place her own status as queen

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<sup>271</sup> SC II: 37; Ager and Hardiman (forthcoming), 24; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 23-24.

<sup>272</sup> Diodorus 30.7.2; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24-25.

was indeterminate.<sup>273</sup> Second, Polyaeus and Porphyry specify that Antiochus II left the kingdom to Seleucus before his death.<sup>274</sup> Third, Seleucus II was about nineteen when Antiochus II died, so it can be argued that he did not need a regent as he would have been at or near the age of majority which, for the Seleucid kings, seems to have been about twenty. All of this, however, does not negate that Laodice played a role in Seleucus' royal upbringing, succession, and early kingship. For the first twelve to thirteen years of Seleucus II's life, he was the heir apparent to the kingship. His promise of future kingship was threatened (if not revoked) when Antiochus II married Berenice Syra and had a son with her.<sup>275</sup> When Antiochus II died, whether he named Seleucus II as his heir or not, Laodice I and her son were quick to seize the opportunity to promote Seleucus II's right to the kingship and to rid themselves of their rivals. If Laodice I did undergo a period of repudiation (c.252-246), she would likely have exhibited the functions of a 'regent' in continuing to groom Seleucus to become king, even though she was no longer queen and her son was technically no longer royal heir.<sup>276</sup>

To secure Seleucus' legitimacy in the eyes of the populace, Laodice is said to have alleged that after the death of Ptolemy II, Antiochus II returned Laodice and their children to their former status.<sup>277</sup> The astronomical diary for 246 confirms that he, Laodice, and their sons were at the sanctuary of Esangil together which, in the contexts of other Seleucid kings, meant the engagement in worship performed by the royal family unit.<sup>278</sup> Laodice, however, is not mentioned as either *basilissa* or 'king's wife'. Laodice I came from a strong political family of noblemen and landowners in Anatolia. Her relocation to Ephesus upon Antiochus II's marriage to Berenice Syra brought her closer to her family and likely strengthened her political ties. The

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<sup>273</sup> OGIS 225; See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 16

<sup>274</sup> Polyaeus. 8.50; Por F 43 = Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6

<sup>275</sup> See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 16 and no. 62.

<sup>276</sup> Seleucus II may have been about thirteen years old in 252.

<sup>277</sup> Por. *FGrH* 43 = Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6; Por. *FGrH* 32; See 2.2 Laodice I and Berenice Syra, 17

<sup>278</sup> Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. 245

success of Seleucus II and Laodice I in their designs to seize the throne strongly suggests that Laodice remained politically active during her repudiation, generating support so that her son could one day be king.

It appears that when Seleucus II did become king, Laodice I was not content to give up the position of power that she had acquired during her regency. The literary sources indicate that she was the driving force behind Seleucus' political actions and kingship, so it is likely that she had planned to continue her strong influence over him once he was king (if not ruling directly through him). Jerome says that Seleucus II ruled over Syria *with* his mother; whether or not this was accurate, it may be safe to say that Laodice continued to hold a great deal of power while her son was king.<sup>279</sup> The murder of Berenice Syra and her young son were the catalysts for the Third Syrian War. Laodice I is considered the main aggressor and the driving force behind the war with Seleucus II playing a secondary role. Justin is the only author who places most of the onus for the murder of Berenice and her child on Seleucus II at the start of his reign; although, even in Justin's account, Seleucus is encouraged to these actions by his mother.<sup>280</sup> Due to the possibility of artistic license of the ancient historians, the literary sources cannot be fully trusted concerning Laodice's involvement in these deaths; but it is certainly true that as early as the beginning of the second century, it was widely believed that Laodice was the cause of the Third Syrian War as it was dubbed the "Laodicean War (*ton Laodikeon polemon*)" on an inscription from this period.<sup>281</sup>

Laodice also allegedly began influencing her younger son, Antiochus 'Hierax' to overthrow Seleucus which could be seen as her attempt to enact another 'regency', but this time over her younger son. Hierax was approximately nineteen years old during this 'regency' (as

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<sup>279</sup> Por. FGrH 43= Jerome *On Daniel* 11.6-9

<sup>280</sup> Justin 27.1.1-2

<sup>281</sup> *IPriene* 37 l. 134 in Hiller von Gaertringen 1906, 42 no. 37 = PHI 162 l. 135. Priene became partial to the Ptolemies during Ptolemy III's invasion of Syria. It is possible that the notion that Laodice was the cause of the war and the puppet-master of Seleucus II was a Ptolemaic invention.



Seleucus had been), the fact that Laodice would attempt another regency when this son was so close to the age of majority suggests that she believed that she would have more control over this son once he became king.

At least one regency can be attributed to Cleopatra Thea, however she may have performed other types of regencies at different points of her career. A co-regency of Cleopatra Thea and Antiochus ‘Grypus’ is evident from the jugate coinage that was issued of the two from c.125-121.<sup>282</sup> She is in the foreground, but Grypus is taller and larger, indicating that Grypus was an adult, but Thea held more power than he did. Her dominance over Grypus is further attested by Justin and Appian.<sup>283</sup> However, as described in Chapter 2, a coin with a sole portrait of a young boy-king named Antiochus Epiphanes issued in 128 suggests that Cleopatra Thea may have been a regent prior to her period of ‘sole-rule’ in 126/5 and her co-regency with Grypus in 125/4.<sup>284</sup> It is unclear why, if this was a regency of mother and son, the issued coinage displayed a sole portrait of the boy-king rather than jugate portraits—a precedent that had already been set by Laodice IV. Furthermore, Thea’s own portrait had appeared on jugate marriage issue coins a few years prior. The ‘reign’ of this boy is not mentioned in the literary sources or in the Babylonian king list. The identity of the boy is also unknown: he could have been the son of Antiochus VII who Porphyry reports died of illness along with his two sisters, or he may have been Antiochus ‘Grypus’ who had the same epithet ‘Epiphanes’ (but it is possible that Grypus may have been in Athens at this time).<sup>285</sup>

Cleopatra Thea may have also attempted another regency or co-regency, although the evidence for this is slim. In 121, Cleopatra Thea reportedly tried to murder her son Antiochus

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<sup>282</sup> SC II: 469-481, nos. 2259-77; See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 29.

<sup>283</sup> App. Syr. 69; Justin 39.2

<sup>284</sup> SC II: 436 & 439 no. 2208-09

<sup>285</sup> Por. F 32 (p 237, Eus.Chron. 3, Shoene-Peterman Ed.); App. Syr. 68; See coins of Antiochus VIII Epiphanes Grypus SC II: 483-520 and pl.46-49

Grypus who was already king.<sup>286</sup> Thea had presumably already experienced the empire's unwillingness to allow a female to rule as king, deduced from the brevity of her period of 'sole-rule' in 126/5. Thus, she would have known better than to try to murder Grypus in order to attempt sole-rule. She would likely have intended to rule through her youngest son, Antiochus Cyzicenus as regent; he would have been between the ages of twelve and seventeen at the time. Cleopatra Thea's alleged willingness to murder her offspring to remain in power makes her the best embodiment of Incessant Regents in this study. Before the regencies and co-regencies mentioned above, according to the literary sources, Thea allegedly murdered her son Seleucus V (her eldest son with Demetrius II) because he seized the diadem without her permission after the death of his father (126/5).<sup>287</sup> If there is a grain of truth to this account, from her history, one could suspect that she may have intended to be co-regent with Seleucus, but by taking on the diadem without her, he cut her out of a very powerful and prominent position, for which she had to murder him to regain. Her period of 'sole-rule' took place shortly after this alleged event.

Finally, Cleopatra Selene was not an Incessant Regent, but she did exhibit the functions of a regent for more than one son. A regency and/or co-regency of Cleopatra Selene over her eldest son, Antiochus XIII Asiaticus is confirmed by the jugate coins bearing their portraits that were issued from c.84-75, but she was likely to have already been working to maintain power and support for her son since the death of her husband Antiochus X Eusebes in c.88, even though the throne was subsequently occupied by the sons of Antiochus Grypus until the death of Philip I Philadelphus in c.84.<sup>288</sup> With Tigranes of Armenia encroaching on the empire, Selene experienced great difficulty in maintaining territory and royal power. In c. 75, Selene took the risk of sending both her sons (Asiaticus and a son whose name is unknown) to Rome with an

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<sup>286</sup> App. Syr. 69; Justin 39.2; See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 29-30.

<sup>287</sup> App. Syr. 69; Justin 39.1.3-4

<sup>288</sup> SC II: 616 no. 2484-86

entourage to claim their legitimacy to the Ptolemaic throne.<sup>289</sup> Selene had possibly intended for her sons to be co-rulers with one son on the Seleucid throne, and the other on the Ptolemaic throne. Her attempt to promote two sons to a kingship indicates that she was in some fashion performing functions associated with regency for both her sons.<sup>290</sup>

#### 4.4 Functions of the Queen Regent

It has been mentioned multiple times in this thesis that some of the regencies were suggested based on the queen performing the “functions” of a regent. These functions have been ascertained from the actions that revealed themselves to be the most important in a queen’s attempt to establish her son as king. From an examination of the ancient sources (literary, epigraphic, and numismatic), there appear to be five main roles that a Queen Regent had to fulfill in order to be successful. *Success* is here defined as regency that results in the heir inheriting the throne as king after reaching the age of majority.<sup>291</sup> First and foremost, the Queen Regent had to ensure the safety and survival of the royal heir; she had to maintain royal power herself in order to ensure the availability of a throne for her son(s); she had to promote the heir as the rightful and legitimate ruler (often through the help of ‘friends’ and courtiers, and at times with military support); she had to ensure that the heir received the proper training to become a successful king; and she had to ensure that the heir finally inherited the throne as king.

The main priority of the Queen Regent, as any mother, was to ensure the safety and survival of her children. The queen’s own status and power (as well as the perpetuation of the

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<sup>289</sup> Cicero *In Verrem* 2.4.61; 2.4.63-65 describes that Asiaticus invited Verres to dinner and served on precious dinnerware. Servants would have been required for such an event and for the hauling of goods from Syria to Rome. Also, in the tale, Asiaticus has slaves bring a candelabrum to Verres.

<sup>290</sup> For further detail see 2.6 Cleopatra Selene, 33.

<sup>291</sup> With the exception of interim regencies, Seleucid regencies seem to have ceased when the heir reached the approximate age of twenty (see Appendix II, 172). By this time, the heir might have obtained both some military achievements and a wife.

dynasty) depended on the survival of the heir. While alive, the king was the supreme protector of the royal family and the empire; when the cities or margins of his empire were under threat, the king went to war. But once the king died, his guardianship went with him, and the queen, with the help of the support systems that she had developed during her career, was left to ensure the safety of her children, the empire, and herself. Rival heirs, usurpers, and neighboring kings could all pose threats to the queen and the heirs, sometimes forcing the queens to go to great lengths to ensure the survival of her children. There is no other story about a Seleucid Queen Regent that more poignantly make this clear than Valerius Maximus' account of Berenice Syra in his chapter on revenge.<sup>292</sup> In this anecdote, Berenice puts her own life at risk to contend physically with Laodice I's general, showing the ferocity that a mother could exhibit when her child is threatened. It is unlikely that Berenice actually physically pursued Caeneus' contingent on horseback, killing him with a rock. What is likely, however, is that Berenice tried everything that she could in order to retrieve her son when he was kidnapped—a known fact that was embellished by later writers.

In order to maintain the dynasty and a throne for the royal heir to inherit, the Queen Regent had to remain in power and keep the empire from being seized by others or from falling apart. Thus she had to ensure good administration of the empire and provide stability to avoid uprising. Her military forces had to remain strong to quell civil unrest or to battle against the armies of attempted usurpers. The act of maintaining the empire and ensuring proper administration in the absence of the king can be seen in Laodice III's possible regency during Antiochus III's anabasis: the empire remained stable in Antiochus III's absence.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Val. Max. 9.10; See 4.2 Unsuccessful Regencies, 55-56.

<sup>293</sup> See 2.3 Laodice III, 20-21.

At times, maintaining the royal power meant seeking the protection of another man by marriage. By remarrying, a Queen Regent was taking a great risk. She was essentially handing over the royal power to another man who was likely to become a rival to her son(s). Such a decision must not have been taken lightly and may have been decided as a means of preserving the throne in a hopeless situation where the Queen Regent felt that she would lose power or support—or her life! The Queens Regent who entered into levirate marriage were Laodice IV and Cleopatra Thea. When Laodice IV married Antiochus IV, her eldest son, Demetrius I, was a hostage in Rome since the succession of his father under the laws of the Peace of Apamea. Her power was threatened by Heliodorus, the court official responsible for Seleucus IV's death and who wished to seize the kingship for himself.<sup>294</sup> Demetrius I was the legitimate heir, but Rome supported Antiochus IV's claim to the throne instead.<sup>296</sup> Once married, Antiochus IV adopted Antiochus the child-king as a son and made himself co-ruler, ending Laodice IV's possible regency. After Laodice gave birth to their son, Antiochus V, he had his nephew murdered to make way in the succession for his own son.<sup>297</sup> This story demonstrates that a king by means of levirate marriage would be likely to prioritize his own interests at the expense of the heir. Cleopatra Thea arranged her *auto-ekdosis* to Antiochus VII when she found herself without a powerful man to protect her interests. Her father was dead, her second husband, Demetrius II, was captive in Parthia, and the empire was in turmoil with the usurper Tryphon ruling over some Seleucid cities.<sup>298</sup> Thea managed to keep her sons safe from new and returning husbands by

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<sup>294</sup> See 2.4 Laodice IV, 23 no.101; App. Syr. 45; Ogden (1999, 142) says that Antiochus IV usurped the kingship, a notion that calls into question whether Laodice had much choice in the arrangement of this marriage.

<sup>296</sup> OGIS 248; (See Austin 1981, no.162); App. Syr. 45; Eusebius *Chron.* 3 (p 208 Shoene-Peterman's Ed.); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 221

<sup>297</sup> Diodorus 30.7.2; See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24-25.

<sup>298</sup> Jos. JA. 1.52; See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 27.

sending them away to be educated.<sup>299</sup> Thea entered into levirate marriages before she ever attempted regency. Once a regent, she never remarried.

Evidently, re-marrying through *auto-ekdosis* was not an ideal situation for the Queens Regent and was often an agreement made out of desperation in order to maintain power or secure the safety of the heirs or themselves. By making their own marriage agreements the queens ensured that the kingdoms did not fall to usurpers or rival kings. Cleopatra Selene arranged two of her four marriages; her first *auto-ekdosis* was to Antiochus Cyzicenus (her brother-in-law and late husband's rival), and her second to her step-son, Antiochus X Eusebes.<sup>300</sup> Laodice IV possibly married her younger brother, Antiochus IV, although it is debatable whether she had much choice in marriage or whether it was imposed upon her.<sup>301</sup> Cleopatra Thea married her brother-in-law, Antiochus VII.<sup>302</sup> Husbands who were born from the Seleucid dynasty would seem to be the best choices as they would presumably have vested interest in the queens, the dynasty, and the empire, and could more easily gain support as a dynastic ruler than an outsider. These men, however, had the goal of being monarch and were vested in their own dynasties, for which the queen played a role in producing heirs, and previous sons of the queen were considered rivals. In these two case studies, the sons from the queen's previous marriage were only safe if sent abroad by the queen herself. Thea's first son, Antiochus, had been sent to be looked after by an Arab sheikh by his father, Alexander Balas, but when Balas was killed, Tryphon was able to retrieve the boy and assume regency over him.<sup>303</sup> This shows that it was not only imperative that the child be sent far out of harm's way, but also that the parents remain alive or in some position of authority in order to protect them. Although alive, Thea did not have power to prevent Tryphon from kidnapping and eventually murdering her son.

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<sup>299</sup> App. Syr. 68

<sup>300</sup> See 2.6 Cleopatra Selene, 30-31.

<sup>301</sup> See 2.4 Laodice IV, 24-25.

<sup>302</sup> See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 27.

<sup>303</sup> See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 26.

It was necessary for the queens to advertise their sons' right to rule via the help of their supporters and the inclusion of their sons in official letters, in benefactions, and on coinage—the most widely distributed pieces of political marketing. Coins would be primarily seen by the army, merchants, and nobles—the classes that depended on a positive relationship with the king for a multitude of benefits, and on whom the king would count for support in order to maintain his rule. Coins were most often issued in order to pay the army, so it was of utmost importance that the king achieved their support lest a usurper arise from amongst them to seize the throne. Jugate coins were a means for the queens to advertise the start of regency, to introduce the future king to the empire, and to achieve the necessary support to maintain their regencies.

At times, the Queens Regent were forced to resort to ruthless means to ensure that their sons inherited the throne. Laodice I, for example, helped or influenced her son Seleucus II to eradicate the young Antiochus and his mother Berenice who were rivals to the throne.<sup>304</sup> Laodice was judged harshly by the historians for this, but it was not uncommon for a king to command the very same acts. For example, when Alexander the Great had begun his reign, he, and his mother, wiped out the family of Attalus.<sup>305</sup>

Seleucid queens seem to have played a role in the education of their sons.<sup>306</sup> Kingship was the most important office in the empire and the heir would no doubt require a great deal of career training in order to become a successful ruler. Just prior to the Hellenistic era, according to Plutarch, Olympias had some influence over Alexander's education. Her relative, Leonidas, was Alexander's tutor for a time and was probably chosen by Olympias herself.<sup>307</sup> It has been noted that Laodice I was possibly responsible for Seleucus II's royal political training during her

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<sup>304</sup> App. Syr. 65

<sup>305</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 48

<sup>306</sup> In the royal Persian court, women customarily educated the sons of the noble families (Brosius 1996, 197)

<sup>307</sup> Plu. *Alex.* 5.4.; Carney *Olympias* 1987, 42

regency and, according to Appian, Cleopatra Thea had her sons educated abroad in order to keep them safe from harm, thus having chosen or authorized the recruitment of a tutor for her sons.<sup>308</sup>

The last function of the Queen Regent and the defining factor for her ‘success’ was to ensure that the heir finally inherited the throne as king. As discussed earlier, two Seleucid Queens Regent were unsuccessful in their goal, Berenice Syra and Laodice IV, because their sons died in childhood and were never recorded as kings in the Babylonian king list.<sup>309</sup> The Incessant Regents, Laodice I and Cleopatra Thea did achieve success in elevating their sons to the kingship; however, they allegedly tried to overthrow and/or murder their sons when they no longer suited their political interests, flying in the face of the purpose of regency in order to hold onto the royal power for themselves.<sup>310</sup>

There is little information in the literary sources about what type of relationship a queen regent might have enjoyed with her son aside from when they experienced strife with one another. As discussed in Chapter 1, the ancient historians were, at times, biased narrators whose works were often laced with melodrama, propaganda, androcentrism, and xenophobia.<sup>311</sup> As with other topics covered in this thesis, a look to past or contemporaneous dynasties often can shed light on aspects of the Seleucid dynasty where information is lacking, but one must bear in mind the tendentious nature of the sources when considering the evidence. For instance, the relationship of Alexander the Great and his mother Olympias was perhaps the most highly documented of all royal Hellenistic mother-son relationships. Alexander was allegedly so close to his mother that Alexander in reply to a letter by Antipater denouncing his mother, Alexander said a single tear of Olympias’ erased a thousand letters like these against her.<sup>312</sup> Alexander’s

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<sup>308</sup> See 4.4 Functions of the Queen Regent, 63-64 and App. *Syr.* 68.

<sup>309</sup> See 4.2 Unsuccessful Regencies, 55-56.

<sup>310</sup> See 4.3 Incessant Regents, 56-60

<sup>311</sup> Marincola 2011, 3 & 8; See 1.1 Literary Sources, 4-6

<sup>312</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 39.7



affection, however, was not meant to be a heart-warming account of mother and son, it was rather a criticism that that Olympias held too much power.<sup>313</sup> Regarding the Persians, Plato (another biased source) says that the monarchy broke down because the kings allowed their sons to be raised by their mothers to be conceited and despotic.<sup>314</sup> The take-away from these clearly moralizing accounts seems to be that some royal sons were believed to be close to their mothers; however, the biased nature of these (and many other literary sources) masks the true nature of royal-mother son relationships so that one is prevented from drawing any concrete conclusions on the matter.

The literary sources almost uniformly paint a picture in which familial closeness is trumped by political strategy or ambition. Queens such as Laodice I and Cleopatra Thea allegedly desired to rule the empire through their sons even once they became kings. In these circumstances, it is alleged that these queens attempted to overthrow their sons to be replaced with a younger and more malleable son. Laodice I tried to usurp her son Seleucus II with her younger son, Antiochus Hierax.<sup>315</sup> She was supported in her plan by her brother Alexander who was the governor of Sardis.<sup>316</sup> Justin's harsh accusations against Hierax, calling him a robber (*latro*) and a hawk (*accipiter*), displays that there was an expectation (at least among the ancient historians) that the eldest son should rule. Cleopatra Thea allegedly killed her eldest son, Seleucus V, and tried to murder her next ruling son, Antiochus Grypus.<sup>317</sup> But the Seleucids were not the only Hellenistic dynasty where a royal mother supported a younger son over the eldest. The Argead Thessalonice, wife of Cassander, reportedly preferred her youngest son Alexander to succeed as king over her elder son, Antipater; he is alleged to have murdered his mother.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Carney *Olympias* 1987, 35-36

<sup>314</sup> Plato *Laws* 3.694a-696a; Carney 1993, 321

<sup>315</sup> Plut. *Morals* 35; Justin 27.2; Plut. *Frat.* 489a

<sup>316</sup> Toye, 2013; Note that Porphyry (FGrH 32) is incorrect in calling Antiochus Hierax, Antigonus.

<sup>317</sup> See 2.5 Cleopatra Thea, 29-30 and 4.3 Incessant Regents, 59-60.

<sup>318</sup> Justin 16.1.1-9; Cassander and Thessalonice's eldest son, Philip, died soon after Cassander.

Cleopatra III of Egypt forced her son and reigning king, Ptolemy IX Soter II, to flee Egypt when she turned the populace against him. She then set up her younger son, Ptolemy V Alexander, as king.<sup>319</sup>

The fact that some of the regents discussed in this thesis were capable of attempting to overthrow or murder their sons leaves one wondering whether they felt any attachment to their children at all. Indication that the Seleucids did have a concept of familial affection can be seen in Laodice III's letter concerning honours paid to the royal family, inscribed on a Sardian decree. Ma says Laodice's use of the endearing term for children, *paidia*, instead of the technical term *tekna* shows that there was a desire for the royal family to appear as a close and loving family.<sup>320</sup> The representation of motherhood and maternal closeness was so important to the rule of Cleopatra VII of Egypt, that she minted coins that depicted her son Caesarion, suckling her breast on the obverse in emulation of the images of the goddess Isis nursing her son Horus.<sup>321</sup> There is no indication in the sources concerning the amount of involvement a Seleucid queen truly had with her children or how close the bond was between the queen and the royal offspring. It is possible that with the political roles that the royal family members were expected to fulfill and the likelihood of having a support staff to aid with the upbringing of the royal children that a royal household might be less inclined to have a strong state of familial intimacy amongst its members. What can be deduced concerning Laodice I and Cleopatra Thea is that their ability to cause harm to their sons is an indication that they did not have a strong bond with them; but the same assumption cannot necessarily be made for the other Seleucid Queens Regent.

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<sup>319</sup> Justin 39.4; Hazzard 2000, 141; Cleopatra; Jos. *AJ.* 13.284-288

<sup>320</sup> SEG 39,1284; Ma 1999, 287

<sup>321</sup> Jones 2012, 169

## Conclusion

In the Seleucid Empire, the only time that a woman would be accepted to rule as 'sole' monarch was during an interregal period as Queen Regent. Queen Regency, much like queenship itself, was not a set profession and was subject to change depending on the circumstances and the queen involved. It was a necessary institution to keep the throne from being seized by usurpers and to preserve the dynasty and the lives of royal mother and children. This study has revealed the possible existence of seven Queens Regent in the course of the Seleucid dynasty: Apama, Laodice I, Berenice Syra, Laodice III, Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, and Cleopatra Selene. Our evidence for the regency behaviours of the first four queens is largely literary and epigraphic, and conclusions are at times necessarily conjectural. The existence of regencies for the last three queens is more concrete as there is numismatic evidence suggesting that these queens performed at least some aspects of this role.

Throughout the course of this study, it has become clear that Queen Regency in the Seleucid dynasty is not subject to a single homogeneous definition. It has been ascertained that the absence (not death) of a king could also lead to a quasi-interregal period, causing the necessity for a queen to temporarily step into the role of regent if the heir was too young to rule temporarily on behalf of his father. Further, it has at times been seen that some Queens Regent were unwilling to give up the political powers that they had enjoyed during their regencies when the heir reached the ruling age. The categories of Interim and Incessant Regent were devised to account for the fact that regency was not a set office, and that there are multiple reasons and functions that could define a queen as a regent.

There are multiple possibilities for further research which would be beneficial supplements to the research in this thesis. Queenship was discussed in this study in order to

provide a further understanding on the roles of the regents; however, an in-depth study of the careers of all the Seleucid queens with a cross-cultural approach considering the customs of their places and dynasties of birth would be beneficial for a greater understanding of queenship in the dynasty. This thesis has mentioned the possibility that the Seleucid dynasty may have drawn inspiration from the Persian and Macedonian dynasties. A work of direct comparison of these dynasties to the Seleucid could shed more light on which institutions were adopted from whom, or if these claims can even be made at all. Many works have been written on the entire life-span of Hellenistic kings. A work of this magnitude for each Seleucid queen would be beneficial for a greater understanding of the roles of royal women, and their augmentation and/or decline of power in the Seleucid Empire.

## Appendix I: The Queens Regent and their Children

Queen	Husband	Children
Apama	Seleucus I	<b>Antiochus I Soter</b>
Laodice I	Antiochus II	<b>Seleucus II Callinicus</b> <b>Antiochus Hierax</b> Apama Stratonice of Cappadocia Laodice
Berenice Syra	Antiochus II	<b>Antiochus</b>
Laodice III	Antiochus III	<b>Antiochus the Younger</b> Seleucus IV Philopator Cleopatra Antiochus IV Epiphanes Laodice IV Antiochis
Laodice IV	Antiochus the Younger Seleucus IV Philopator  Antiochus IV Epiphanes	Nysa <b>Antiochus the child-king</b> Demetrius I Soter Laodice V Antiochus V Eupator Laodice
Cleopatra Thea	Alexander Balas Demetrius II  Antiochus VII Soter	Antiochus VI Dionysios Seleucus V Laodice <b>Antiochus VIII Epiphanes Grypus</b> Laodice Laodice <b>Antiochus (Epiphanes?)*</b> ?Seleucus? <b>Antiochus IX Eusebes Cyzicenus</b>
Cleopatra Selene	Ptolemy IX Lathyros [Egypt]  Antiochus VIII Grypus Antiochus IX Cyzicenus Antiochus X Eusebes Philopator	Berenice III Ptolemy XII ?Ptolemy? --- --- <b>Antiochus XIII Philadelphus Asiaticus</b> <b>Son name unknown (Seleucus?)</b>

Note: Children's names in bold are sons who were possibly under the regency of their mothers.

\* There is a possibility that Cleopatra Thea was not regent over this boy but was rather twice regent to Antiochus Grypus.

## Appendix II: Dates of Regencies/Co-regencies

Queen	Heir	Dates	Heir's Age (in years)
Apama	Antiochus I Soter	307-305	16-18
Laodice I	Seleucus II Callinicus Antiochus Hierax	246 244*	19 19
Berenice Syra	Antiochus	246	3
Laodice III	Antiochus the Younger	209-205	12-16
Laodice IV	Antiochus the child-king	175	4
Cleopatra Thea	Antiochus Epiphanes Antiochus VIII Epiphanes Grypus Antiochus IX Eusebes Cyzicenus	128 125-121 121	7 or 14** 18-22 12***
Cleopatra Selene	Antiochus XIII Eusebes Asiaticus Son name unknown (Seleucus?)	88-75 75	6-21 <20

Note: All dates and ages are approximate

\* This age is estimated. Assuming that Antiochus Hierax and Seleucus II were not twins, Hierax would be, at minimum, about one or two years younger than Seleucus, but there may have been a larger gap in age between the brothers.

\*\*The discrepancy in age is due to two possibilities of the boy's identity. The first is that this Antiochus may be the son of Antiochus VII who Porphyry (F 32) indicates is the third out of five children. Assuming that all children had the same mother, Cleopatra Thea, he could be no more than seven years old in 128. The second is that this may in fact be Antiochus Grypus.

\*\*\* Assuming that Cyzicenus is the fifth child of Antiochus VII and Cleopatra Thea, he could be no more than twelve years old in 121 (provided that none of the previous children were twins). If he was the first or only child of Cleopatra Thea and Antiochus VII, he would be no more than seventeen.

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\* The author admits that German is not her first secondary language, and although German sources have been read and considered for this thesis, there are additional titles that are of value to this subject:

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